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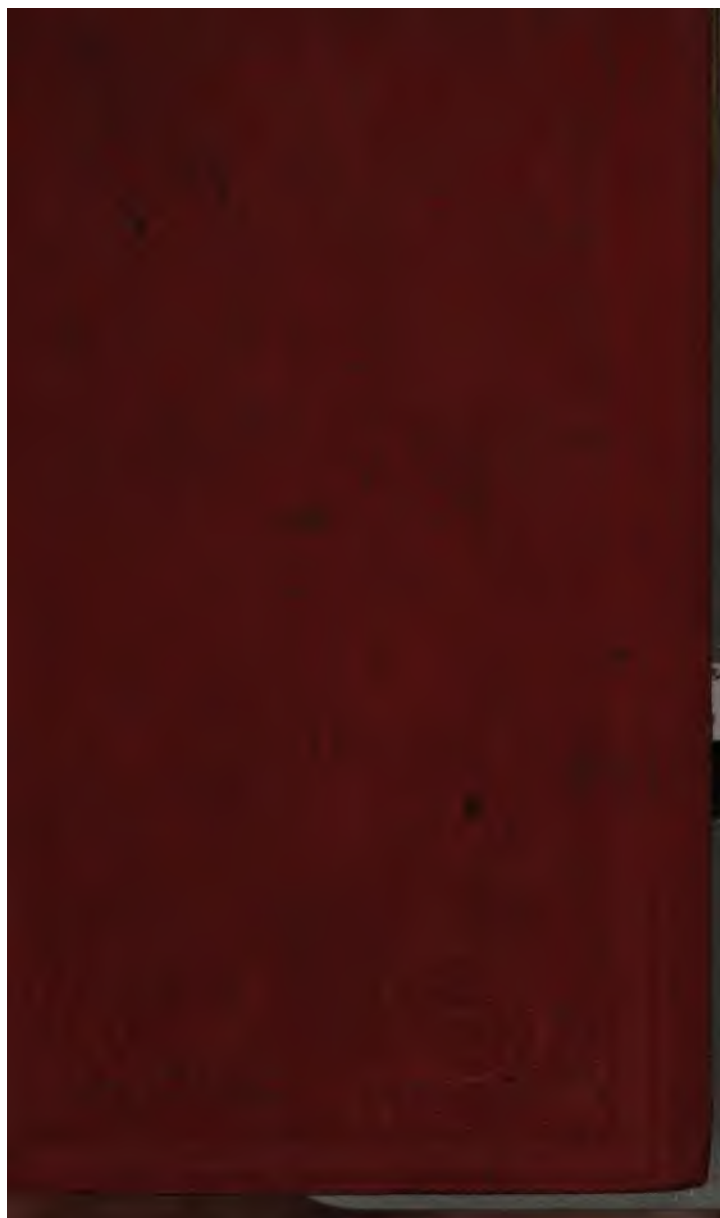
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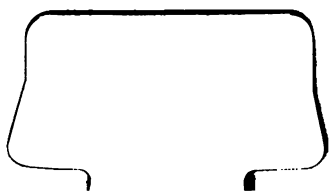
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A PLOT

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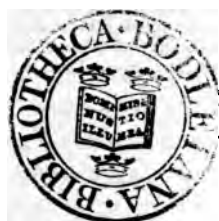
A P E E R A G E.

Blame we this man his proud aspirings? No:
Distinctions make a world of difference.
What citizen would not kneel down to kiss
The coronet, he loveth as his child?
What tender parent, but is strangely mov'd,
When his charm'd ear drinks in those liquid sounds—
'Your daughter, sir—the Countess?'

TRUTH IN A TITLE.

LONDON:
WILLIAM TEGG AND CO., CHEAPSIDE.

MDCCCXLVIII.



London:
Printed by STEWART and MURRAY,
Old Bailey.

PREFACE.

THOUGH a great book has, by the patriarch of reviewers, in a fit of critical despondency, been classed among those stupendous evils, which the over-productiveness of human ingenuity inflicts alike upon the lover of romance, and the manufacturer of Manchester, we are not quite certain that a duodecimo, by virtue of its small specific gravity, is utterly incapable of producing that oppression on the chest of thought, from which a 'constant reader' must in silence often so acutely suffer. Such being our state of honest incertitude, we do not rest our anticipations of public support, solely upon our little cubic feet, nor consider ourselves deserving of a larger measure of indulgence than Tom Thumb, simply because our presence is so much less conspicuous. The proudest distinction known to the Lilliputian world, our youthful alacrity altogether repudiates—that of being 'little and old.' We

deem it important to make this candid avowal, lest we might be suspected of knowingly and wilfully flattering a popular delusion, which often renders it difficult to distinguish clearly between a merit and a misfortune.

There is one grave complaint, however, which we fear a discerning public will prefer against this plain, unvarnished tale—it is not illuminated by the popular torch of art. May we, with deferential delicacy, suggest to our indulgent patrons, that the omission is a negative compliment to their apprehensive sympathies?—confiding in which, we felt assured that our conceptions, however poor or infirm (being nevertheless of good character and repute), would meet with as prompt and cordial a recognition, as could be secured for them by the most graphic card of a mutual artistic acquaintance.

A. A.

LORD VISCOUNT PETERSHAM; OR, A PLOT AND A PEERAGE.

CHAPTER I.

A politician, sir! your true chameleon—changing his many-coloured coats, as if with cunning malice to set philosophers together by the ears, and make them vow that black is not so black as oft 'tis painted; the hinges of whose soul, so lubricated, a breath will stir them.—
POPULARITY.

It was a calm moon-lit night, and the little old-fashioned town of N—— lay sleeping in the partial shade of its venerable church spire, which, perched on a commanding eminence, threw a changeful mantle over the brazen image of St. Agatha, who, with her noseless infant in arms, occupied the centre of the market-place. The last misguided votary of Bacchus, under convoy of his censorious consort, with her oft-required hand-lantern, had been safely towed into his own peculiar alley; and the only specimen of animated nature which remained in the broader thoroughfare was a vagrant dog, who, with his fore legs stretched up to the balustrades of the ancient bridge, listened fearfully to the splash of the water-rats among the bulrushes, adjoining which a barge was moored, laden with nutritious grain, upon which they were probably meditating an organized invasion.

Suddenly, and while from the old clock-tower Time's herald, announcing the ghostly hour of midnight, imposed momentary silence upon the guardian owl of some neighbouring turret, there rattled over the balustraded bridge, whose irregular causeway was the object of universal execration, a travelling chaise, with four horses and two postillions, who, plying their whips with such fierce enthusiasm as to endanger the equilibrium of several doctors' ruby gas-lamps, turned with masterly skill the acute angle at the extremity of the high street, and pulled sharp up at the Doric portico of an hotel, over which the truncated effigy of a red lion, assuming a pugilistic attitude, might have served, had it not already fulfilled that office, as the figure-head of a man-of-war.

Notwithstanding the advanced hour, a tall, clerical-looking waiter, in deep mourning, was promptly in attendance; and, opening the door of the chaise, a gentleman alighted, wearing a Spanish cloak, with a newspaper in his hand, which he carried into the hotel, leaving the clerical waiter to exercise the high privilege of his calling by searching the pockets and cushions of the vehicle; from which he extracted a rosewood case that suggested the idea of pistols, an ivory paper-cutter, and a Court Guide.

During these operations, the knock-kneed ostler of the establishment was assisting the tri-coloured postboy—whose white hat contrasted nicely with his blue jacket and scarlet cheeks,—in unstrapping and transporting a buff leathern portmanteau, the brass plate to which announced not only the title, but, as if to strike all lingering professors of larceny with salutary awe, presented also the armorial bearing of Lord Viscount Petersham.

And now a serious difficulty arose: excepting a double-bedded room on the second floor, every chamber (and the Red Lion boasted of fifteen) was pre-occupied. For once the self-possessed waiter, whose powers, owing to his mistress being a widow, were nearly co-extensive with those of landlord, betrayed a painful feeling of irresolution. Never had truth appeared to him before in such odious colours;—to make a candid confession—to throw the house, as it were, upon his lordship's indulgence, and thereby risk a forfeiture of his lordship's patronage, was worse than death; it was dishonour. Necessity, however, is the parent of enterprise as well as of invention; and assuming an austere expression, which was in keeping with the rigidity of his white cravat, he ascended the grand staircase, and tapped softly at a blue-pannelled door. The operation produced its desired effect.

"I am sorry to disturb you, sir," said the Majordomo, opening the chamber door in compliance with a half-smothered summons which issued from the cavernous recesses of a mountain of blankets.

"Hang your sorrow!—why did you, then?" grumbled the invisible.

"Why, sir," replied the head-waiter, clearing his throat to command an additional emphasis, "a nobleman has just arrived quite unexpectedly, sir, and all our single-bedded rooms are engaged by gentlemen of family, sir."

"Well," returned the unseen, "I'm not to blame for that, am I? Let your nobleman sleep on a couple of chairs, or on the hearth-rug; his bones are neither softer nor harder than other people's, I suppose."

"But, Mr. Shuttleworth," cried the mellow-toned

landlady, who—followed by her faithful “Boots,” with the symbol of his craft, a boot-jack, in his hand,—had just reached the landing-place. “But, Mr. Shuttleworth, would you be kind enough, on this very particular occasion, to accommodate his lordship by removing into the double-bedded room?”

“Yes, if you think proper to carry me, marm,” returned the obliging old gentleman, whose extrication from the mass of coverings, in which he was buried, might have required as much patient labour as the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy.

The superintendent waiter knitted his brows; he knew the impracticable customer to whose benevolence and reverence of aristocracy he was vainly appealing, and his heart sunk within him. With similar perplexity the landlady turned to the trembling “boots,” who, spell-bound, as it were, by his mistress’s awe-inspiring gaze, incontinently dropped the boot-jack, which, toppling downwards, created a most astounding disturbance throughout the establishment, and elicited loud cries of wrath and terror from those weary and way-worn travellers, whose slumbers had been prematurely destroyed by the report of these nocturnal thunderbolts.

Mr. Nicholas Shuttleworth, the eccentric old gentleman who so politely consented to resign his bed to Lord Petersham, upon certain impracticable conditions, was the senior partner of a mercantile firm, to which, in his declining years, he lent his name, but rendered very little active co-operation or advice. In person he was tall and spare; and though he had probably never handled a spade in his life—certainly not in a church-yard—his drooping attitude, which proceeded less from infirmity, than from those negligent habits which philosophers are pecu-

liarily apt to fall into, reminded one forcibly of a respectable sexton. His hair, which was carefully brushed back from his forehead and temples, was almost as white as powder, though he had long discarded that pulveriferous characteristic of the old *régime*, as being at variance with his more recently acquired contempt for aristocratic usages and courtly forms. He had certain little peculiarities of dress, as well as of manner, amongst which might be noted a straw hat, of an original pattern, and worn, indiscriminately, at all times and places; but not ill-adapted to his hale and rosy countenance, in which benevolence and mischief, sarcasm and humanity, were so nicely balanced as to cause him to be regarded, even by his most intimate acquaintances, with almost as much perplexity as confidence or respect.

In politics, Mr. Shuttleworth belonged to no party. Political virtue, indeed, he treated as a chimera—he had no faith in it; and the madness of many for the gain of a few, instead of rousing his warmest sympathies, only served to provoke his caustic and solitary derision. With him “equality,” and the “rights of man,” were not mere phrases to intoxicate a mob, or terrify a bevy of antiquated spinsters. Poverty on the highway he never passed but with a manly salutation: though had he encountered royalty in his reflective excursions, George Fox himself might probably not have exhibited a more tenacious beaver. His favorite writer, over whose pungent philippics he ruminated with immense relish, was honest John Wilkes, whose interesting portrait ornamented his drawing-room, and whose celebrated “North Briton” (No. 45, not excepted) occupied a conspicuous and honour-

able position in his library. A spirit of whimsical independence pervaded alike his principles and his practice. Ambition, he either could not, or would not understand : and while he marvelled how high born Englishmen could stoop so low as to pick up a garter, he found it painfully difficult to believe that any but fools, or parasites, could be caught by a riband, or dazzled by a star.

Yet it must be confessed, with all due regret for human inconstancy, that Mr. Nicholas Shuttleworth had not always—we don't mean from infancy but from a period of fifty odd years subsequent thereto—cherished these ultra-liberal feelings, nor maintained this posture of pleasing but extreme humility. The time had been, when his ardent patriotism gave birth to a highly wrought vindication of the colonial stamp duty, and the consequent American war ; and when Mr. Pitt was hailed with rapturous adoration as a heaven-born minister. The time had been, when Mr. Shuttleworth, who now so thoroughly despised, and so savagely satirised all schemes of worldly ambition, came forward, boldly waving the good old colours of Church and State, as a candidate for the representation of his native borough, and was defeated by a majority of 2110, the number polled by Shuttleworth being seventeen, which included the votes of those truly independent electors his grocer, his coal merchant, and himself.

From this period Mr. Shuttleworth's political sentiments changed their colour entirely. The cerulean hue of Toryism deepened into the ultra-marine of Republicanism, without even pausing in its transition, at the neutral tints of Whiggery. A morbid aversion to all conventional distinctions, seized upon his jaundiced imagination. Coachman, footman, and

groom, were suddenly emancipated from their flaming livery, and taught to uphold their self-esteem, without the artificial stimulants of scarlet, plush, and shoulder-knots; nor did his revolutionary frenzy stop here. Despising the grand eloquence of civic orators, and the contracted sphere of municipal legislation, Nicholas Shuttleworth resigned his aldermanic gown, and, with merciless irony, had it converted into a mantle for his monkey, upon whom he ever afterwards bestowed the respectful attention due to a recognised member of the Corporation.

The fine old English mansion, Shuttleworth Hall, to which, on his taking possession by right of purchase, Mr. Shuttleworth had given his own euphonious patronymic, had formerly pertained to a fashionable nobleman, who, charmed with the polished society of Paris and Baden-Baden, and neglecting his patrimonial acres, had almost buried his honourable and ancient house beneath the incumbrances which his luxurious habits were still perpetually seeking rather to augment than diminish. Many a stately oak, which, planted by one of his distinguished ancestors, refused to bend its sturdy branches to the storm, had been felled, to lay as a votive offering at the foot of some adorable *cantatrice*, while tithes, both great and small, to the grief and scandal of dowager aunts, were ruthlessly sacrificed to spread a banquet for the sons and daughters of Belial and the Ballet.

And this mansion, so fraught with historical interest—so interwoven, with aristocratic associations, with its park, warren, dovecotes, and appurtenances, was now the absolute property of that uncompromising old Jacobin, Nicholas Shuttleworth. Verily it was good for one's political edification to

behold how the sarcastic Nicholas did love to moralize over the dilapidated grandeur of that "noble house"—how he discerned in the crumbling scutcheons, and carved images of heraldry, emblems of the instability of human greatness, how the gaudy peacock which strutted on the lawn—the only reminiscence of chivalry there existing—was to him a living symbol of the pomp and vanity of this pretentious world, and how, designating that ornithological dandy his "Highness," he fed him regularly with his own hand, and treated him in their daily walks with the marked courtesy which was due to the nobility of his plumage.

Meditating upon his favourite theme, of which a peacock's tail was so splendid an illustration, Mr. Shuttleworth was engaged one morning with a bag of barley grains, in ministering to the necessities of his "highness," when his attention was arrested by a rustic looking postman, who took from the leathern pouch suspended at his side, a letter directed to Nicholas Shuttleworth, Esquire.

"From my Lady Bloomsbury, eh!" said Mr. Shuttleworth, inspecting the superscription, "franked, too, by Lord Redcliffe; you see, George, how these great people do it, paying no postage in order that they may be distinguished from common folks, like you and myself!"

"I don't suppose none of us would pay much," returned the official with a grin, "if we could help it, as well as them, only we can't, there's the misfortune of it."

"You think so?" rejoined Mr. Shuttleworth, opening his snuff box, "your sentiments, George, are not very flattering to the honesty of our common nature."

"Will you allow me, sir?" said the peripatetic philosopher, with an air of easy assurance.

"But we must remember," observed Mr. Shuttleworth, extending his snuff box to his intelligent acquaintance, "we must remember that you are one of his majesty's servants, and whatever your opinions may be, George, your tongue is tied upon questions of this delicate nature."

"As to my tongue being tied," said the postman, returning Mr. Shuttleworth his snuff box, "as I don't get my living like a lawyer, by the use of it, it aint of much consequence; but I should be sorry if many of his majesty's servants wear out as much shoe leather as I do in his service, and get as little for it;" and with this observation, Mr. Shuttleworth's familiar friend, George, whistled to his dog, and resumed his peregrinations.

"So it is with the body politic as with the body physical," mused Mr. Shuttleworth, whose mental alembic seemed capable of distilling from the rawest material the pure spirit of his philosophy, "the head is afflicted with apoplexy, while the toes suffer miserably from cramp; but what says my Lady Bloomsbury? does she want to borrow money? I can't conceive what other motive could induce sister Sally to honour us with her communications." And putting on his spectacles, Mr. Shuttleworth steadily perused the epistle, which announced Lady Bloomsbury's intention of paying a visit to Shuttleworth Hall, to afford her daughters, Helen and Laura, an opportunity of attending the races, which were to commence on the ensuing day.

"And is it come to this," said Mr. Shuttleworth, and a smile passed over his pleasant countenance; "will sister Sally condescend at last to visit her old

Jacobinical brother, as she used to call him? Well, we must give her ladyship that reception which the dignity of a baronet's widow is justly entitled to: "here, Mallows," he cried, addressing the old grey-headed gardener, who, with a large pair of shears in his hand, had just come out of the adjacent conservatory, "I expect my sister, Lady Bloomsbury, here shortly; just tell Robert to see and get the coach-house and stables in readiness, for I suppose my lady will come in her state carriage; and, Mallows, how 's the alderman going on?"

"Why, I think he be a little better, sir," answered Mallows; "I tied up the alderman's wizen with an old white handkerchief which cook lent me, which makes him look very comfortable like; it was an awkward scratch, though, what Master Tom gave him; howsever, he had no business in the kitchen, and his worship won't show his face there again in a hurry, I warrant, sir."

"It's of no use making Jocko an alderman, you see, Mallows," observed the master of Shuttleworth Hall; "malicious people will not respect the gown when there's any thing so irrational as a monkey in it! Here comes Miss Polly," he added, as a young lady approached, followed by an Italian greyhound, with her gipsy bonnet hanging behind her as if blown off by the wind, and holding to her bosom a bird which she occasionally raised to her lips, and caressed in the fondest and most provoking manner possible.

This was Mary Shuttleworth, upon whom her father doated with that tenderness which is commonly shown to an only child, whom all acknowledged to be, in face and disposition, the picture of her poor lamented mother. Sweet, simple, and kind-

hearted, she was one of those interesting blue-eyed maidens—a specimen of pure native produce, who, regardless or unconscious of Parisian innovations, whether *à la reine*, or *à la chinoise*, retain those pretty unassuming drop curls at seventeen, which are so becoming in little girls of seven. Serene in temper, and domesticated in her habits, as prompt to bestow her sympathy upon those who needed it, as her smiles upon those who did not, there was nothing in her to admire, and every thing to love.

In one particular, and one only, Mary resembled her father. She had no ambition; but, unlike that mutable politician, she had never sighed for parliamentary distinction, nor changed her principles when she found it unattainable.

“What have you there?” inquired Mr. Shuttleworth, as Mary sat down in a bee-hive chair, and smoothed the ruffled feathers of her protégé.

“Poor little thing!” said Mary, looking up with a sparkling gem upon her eye lash, “it was hopping about the branches of our great walnut tree, when a butcher-boy riding past struck it with his whip, and has hurt its leg severely, I am very much afraid.”

“If you think the limb’s fractured, Polly, you had better take it to Dr. Hedgehog, and get him to set it,” replied Mr. Shuttleworth, with a smile; “by-the-by, Polly, I’ve just received a letter from your aunt, Lady Bloomsbury; she will be here presently, I expect; and, therefore, you had better put on your best frock, and your best manners.”

“And are my cousins coming too?” inquired Mary, with an air of terrified delight.

“I suppose so,” returned Mr. Shuttleworth; “as we are indebted to the races for this high honour.

Aunt Sally, like many other old women, carries her prejudices in her pocket, and would rather give away a principle than a penny : she loves both her church and her king, and would not sleep beneath the roof of a Jacobin on any account, if it were not more economical than putting up at an hotel ; but we must see about making preparations for her ladyship's reception."

So saying, Mr. Shuttleworth entered the house, and summoned his footman to his presence.

"Sam," said Mr. Shuttleworth to a raw-looking young man, with a mouth like a fish, perpetually open for public observation, "Sam, I expect a lady of quality here shortly upon a visit, with two young ladies, her daughters ; she is my sister, and her title is 'Lady Bloomsbury ;' in addressing her you will be sure and say 'my lady,' and in speaking of her you will style her,—don't forget now,—her 'ladyship ;' for instance, if she ask you for a glass of water, you say—not, 'yes, ma'am,' as you would to an ordinary person, but—what should you say ?"

Sam twiddled the button hole of his coat for a few moments, and then, with respectful hesitation, replied, "Wouldn't you rather have beer, my lady ?"

"That will do, Sam," cried Mr. Shuttleworth, with a burst of laughter ; "very good indeed, that will do for an after dinner story : go clean your knives, and study your lesson well, before you come up for her ladyship's examination."

Sam, who seemed quite unconscious of having uttered any thing deserving of so much applause, retired with some surprise in his countenance, and had just closed the door behind him, when a doubt struck his mind, eliciting, like the collision of flint and steel, a bright idea. "My lady Bloomsbury,"

he reflected, "comes with two daughters; how am I to tell one from t'other? O! of course she, the old 'un, must be called *old* Lady Bloomsbury."

This conclusion seemed so reasonable, that Sam thought it superfluous to hold any further argument with himself in reference thereto, and reluctant to expose his ignorance by asking for further directions, he proceeded down stairs, and was soon actively employed in scraping horse-radish, with a firm conviction, that when the hour of trial came, he should acquit himself to his master's entire satisfaction.

It was not long before Sam had an opportunity of showing his indulgent preceptor, how greatly he had profited by his recent lecture on etiquette, when presenting himself at the carriage door, where a very superior and languid-looking lacquey, in powder, with a silver-headed cane, waited his approach—Lady Bloomsbury desired that a cushion might be brought, to facilitate her descent from the coach steps.

"Old Lady Bloomsbury wants a cushion to step on," cried Sam, *ore rotundo*, to a servant-maid, who blushing hastened to comply with her ladyship's wishes.

Knowing Mr. Shuttleworth's mortal aversion to titular honours, "old" Lady Bloomsbury naturally surmised, that this intolerable affront had been rendered with his special sanction and authority; and accordingly, as soon as she came within view of the reviler of all that was *distingué*, she lost no time in acknowledging the compliment, which Mr. Shuttleworth in vain attempted to repudiate; and it was not till the young ladies interposed, that their indignant mama could be prevailed upon to believe that, in

clothing her name with the mantle of antiquity, Samuel had acted as a free and irresponsible agent.

While this delicate affair was under discussion in the parlour, a novel and amusing interlude was being performed in the open air,—the *dramatis personæ* being Mr. Shuttleworth's unsophisticated retainer, and that languid gentleman in dove-coloured raiment, to whom his honour—identical apparently with that of his mistress,—was as sacred as his livery or his life.

"I tell you what it is, my fine fallow!" he said, partially closing his eyes, and letting his syllables slip softly from his parted lips; "if I hear any more of your demned impertinence, I shall feel it my duty to give you a kick!"

With this polite intimation, Lady Bloomsbury's model footman, who seemed to be suffering from *ennui*, languidly delivered to Samuel a band-box and a magnificent nosegay, and bade him carry them to Lady Bloomsbury, and look sharp about it.

"You are rether fast, I think," observed Sam, his projecting ears glowing with shame and ill-concealed passion.

The only reply which Lady Bloomsbury's model footman condescended to make to this observation, was a sudden elevation of his foot, in strict accordance with the severe sense of duty, by which such proceedings should always be regulated.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Sam, turning sharply round on his assailant, who was smoothing his eyebrow with the tip of his little finger, while the fat old coachman, in his white silky wig, was so convulsed with silent merriment that the cowslip hammercloth shook with all its tassels beneath him.

"Just kick me agen—that's all!" cried Sam, boldly, and forgetting that his powers of resistance were trammelled by the band-box and the nosegay, with which his hands were encumbered.

"My good fallow," replied the model footman, "be contint; pig driving is not my *forte* at all. I leave you to your measter." And turning on his elastic toes, he was about to mount the coach-box, when Sam, who felt that flesh and blood could not "put up" with this cool audacity—more especially from one of the cloth,—regardless of his unfit condition for pugilistic warfare, rushed madly forward, and, raising the magnificent bouquet wherewith he had been entrusted, was about to attack his insolent foe, when he unhappily missed his footing, and tumbling headlong to the earth, crushed beneath him the precious band-box containing Lady Bloomsbury's new Persian turban and sundry minor articles, whose fragility demanded the tenderest manipulation.

The shrieks of poor Lady Bloomsbury, who, with her daughters and Mr. Shuttleworth, observed this deplorable transaction from the dining-room window, can only be imagined by the "heads of families," to whom a ruffled feather, or a crumpled ribbon, comes home with all the thrilling emotions excited by an earthquake, or some other catastrophe equally appalling and irreparable.

CHAPTER II.

Pride, not o'erstrain'd, may well become a man ;
But woman's life, is soft humility.
I could no more
Feast on love's balmy dream, beneath that eye
So scornful bent to earth, so proudly rais'd
Unworshipping to Heaven, than I could sleep,
My brain oppress'd with visions of dead kings,
Under the shadow of a pyramid.

LOVE AND PRIDE.

THE summary of Lady Bloomsbury's character, in which Mr. Shuttleworth represented her as an "old woman who carried her prejudices in her pocket, and would rather give away a principle than a penny," was caustic and untrue. That she had her amiable weaknesses, may be admitted without compromising her claims to our profoundest respect ; but that she was open to the grave accusation of penuriousness, or advanced age, we must indignantly deny. The wealthy widow of an agricultural baronet, who immortalized himself by the vastness of his turnips and the fatness of his south-downs,—her very failings leaned to virtue's side. A poor grey-headed old man, with a truly grateful disposition, was an object that always met with her liveliest interest and encouragement. There was something so picturesque about grey hairs and tatters, that had it been in her power to have banished poverty for ever from the world, we fear poor Lady

Bloomsbury would have hesitated, out of mere compassion for the Royal Academy.

Coupled with her artistical regard for the poor, was that maternal anxiety and vigilance which two young unmarried daughters—handsome and well provided for,—never permitted to repose. Both were highly accomplished, both were elegant in their manners, and each had a style of beauty almost perfect of its kind, though as dissimilar as noon from night. Helen, the eldest, with her splendid figure and haughty demeanor, looked as if she rather scorned than pitied those who were stricken powerless, by the flashing of her dark Italian eyes. She had at one time astonished her friends by the brilliancy of her poetry, but latterly had quite forsaken the melancholy muse;—her self-sustained pride, it was alleged, disdaining the admiration of rhapsodical youths, as well as the lavish praises of those fair enthusiasts, who were constantly beseeching her refulgent genius to cast an halo upon their benighted albums. Helen's fame, however, did not rest entirely on this slender foundation: it was rumoured, and vouched for by good authority, that her histrionic talents were of no common order; in proof of which, when private theatricals had taken possession of Talma Castle, and the senses of those who dwelt therein, Helen Bloomsbury, at the special instance and request of the noble *entrepreneur*, undertook the principal *rôle* in translated selections from one of Corneille's most frigid tragedies, and positively electrified an audience—not very susceptible of electrical influences,—by the vital sparks which in rapid succession were thrown off by her performance on that memorable occasion.

The golden tresses, gaiety, and buoyant gracefulness of Laura Bloomsbury, formed a striking contrast to the haughty presence of her intellectual sister. If Helen would have bound her captives to the triumphal chariot of her charms, Laura, like some mischief-loving sylph, delighted in bewitching and enticing the swain who, fascinated by her laughing blue eyes, pursued her through a labyrinth of difficulties till weary and ready to sink from sheer exhaustion, when she would reward his agonies with their strongest provocative—a smile. For this her education, which had been “finished” in Paris, was possibly more to blame than her natural disposition, which, beneath a glittering surface, was really tender, generous, and sincere. Perfection, we know, is not attainable on this sublunary sphere, and Laura had no desire to pass for the inhabitant of any other. Saving these terrestrial arts of coquetry—this wicked trifling with the most hallowed feelings of helpless man,—Laura Bloomsbury would not have been a woman, but a wonder; not a thing of earth, but the intangible creation of some visionary sonneteer.

If Helen had numerous admirers, for none of whom she apparently entertained any serious regard, Laura had as many lovers; and though, perhaps, sincerely attached to one, that coquettish tendency, of which we have just spoken, gave, on a moderate calculation, encouragement to at least twenty inevitable victims. It was reported that Helen had had some “excellent offers,” but that her ambition pointed to a coronet; and those who knew her most intimately, were those who marvelled most that she was not already Lady C—— L—— instead of plain Helen Bloomsbury. In

this wide-spread feeling of astonishment we, on certain grounds to be hereafter explained, do not altogether participate. That Helen's aspirations were lofty, may be taken for granted; but that her omission to secure an earl, viscount, or even baronet, was at all attributable to any culpable neglect of her own, we do most firmly and gallantly deny. An irresistible proof of Helen's innocence, in this respect, we think, is afforded by the fact that Lady Bloomsbury's motive, in trespassing upon her Jacobinical brother's hospitality, was not alone to have an opportunity of attending the races, as cunningly alleged, but, by an indefinite prolongation of her visit, to be enabled, without fear of interruption or bias, to go into committee upon the eligibility of a certain Captain Hippesley—at present Helen's most favoured suitor,—and who was the heir-presumptive of old Lord Kew; but whose chances of succeeding to the title were seriously depreciated in the matrimonial market, by the rumour of his uncle's forthcoming marriage—a delicate calamity to which Captain Hippesley had, as yet, made no allusion whatever, but of which Helen and her mama had been providentially apprised by the “fashionable intelligence” of the *Post*, which constituted their daily and indispensable mental diet.

“As matters stand at present, Helen,” observed Lady Bloomsbury, when speaking confidentially to her daughter on this topic, “we cannot be too cautious how we proceed; the rumour of his uncle's marriage may not be true, or should it be otherwise, who can tell how long Lord Kew may survive it, or a thousand other things may or may not happen; therefore it would be unfeeling and inconsiderate to

break off the acquaintance entirely with Captain Hippesley, before we know what really are his expectations. Laura, my love, what are you laughing at?"

Laura, who was chatting with her cousin, Mary, at the window, instead of answering her mama's inquiry, gave renewed indulgence to her mirthful emotions, as she cried, "Did one ever see such a figure? Who can it be? Do you know him, Mary? Is it some Knight-errant of yours? Don Quixote, perhaps, come to life again. Well, he is an oddity!"

"It is no acquaintance of mine," said Mary, laughing; "he must be some poor gentleman, I think, who has lost his way."

"And his wits, too," added Laura, "judging from the manner in which he turns out his elbows; striving, no doubt, to bewitch the world with noble horsemanship."

"Who is it that you are making fun of?" said Lady Bloomsbury, approaching the window; "surely it is, unless my eyes very much deceive me—"

"Sir Otto de Beauvoir—the fright," said Helen, looking over her mama's shoulder.

By this time the observed of all observers, a tall slender figure, surmounting a light chestnut angular looking horse, and who, as if to show himself to greater advantage, rode up the avenue at a very slow pace, had approached sufficiently near to discern the ladies at the window, when raising his hat, he saluted them with inimitable grace.

"There are elegant curling locks, Mary," whispered Laura; "but you must not tell any body—he wears a wig; see how he shows his beautiful pearl-like teeth; they are all false, he hasn't a natural tooth in

his head; and just notice him raising his delicately pencilled eyebrows; they are quite new; I'm certain we never saw *them* before, mama; and then, Mary, do but admire the rose-like bloom upon his cheek. Oh! what would I not give to know how much it costs him weekly for rouge and pearl-pwder."

"You don't mention his heart," said Mary, smiling, "is that false too?"

"His heart!" replied Helen, with that disdainful expression, which so well became her haughty countenance, "do you imagine such an antiquated thing as that can have a heart?"

"O! but to hear him talk, Mary, of the beauties of nature," cried Laura; "it's really dreadful that any person, at his time of life, can be guilty of such hypocrisy."

"Mary, my love," said Lady Bloomsbury, addressing her niece, "don't allow your mind to be prejudiced by anything they tell you. Sir Otto is a very well-bred, kind, attentive, and good-hearted creature, and it's very wrong, indeed, and I'm very angry with you, Laura, if he has any infirmity, to turn that into ridicule which is his misfortune, and not his fault."

Lady Bloomsbury had just finished this sensible admonition, when Sir Otto de Beauvoir, dismounting with great care, delivered his steed ("sister to Rozinante," if we may use the classical phraseology of the turf) to the groom who attended him, and advanced to the vestibule of the mansion with a gait so peculiar, that without any great stretch of imagination, one might have supposed his legs were anxious to repudiate all connexion with the indi-

vidual in whose service they were so curiously employed.

"What age is he?" inquired Mary, much interested in this personification of high art, "he cannot be a young man, I think, if one may judge from his appearance."

"Nobody knows his age," replied Laura, "it's a mystery. I believe him to be sixty."

"No such thing," said Lady Bloomsbury, "nor anything like it; he is within a year or two, more or less, about my own age."

"How can that be, mama," returned Laura, "when he has no recollection of the comet, which you can distinctly remember."

"Not distinctly, Laura," rejoined her mama, with an air of correction; "I have some faint recollection of it, but it is impossible that I can remember it distinctly, being so very young at the time."

"Young, eh!" cried Mr. Shuttleworth, who had just entered the apartment rubbing his hands at some pleasant conceit, which he kept as his own private property, "old enough to gather apples in the orchard, and to flatten my fine Roman nose by dropping a golden pippin upon it, as I lay sleeping in helpless infancy upon the grass, where you had placed me. Do you remember that, Sally?"

Whether Lady Bloomsbury remembered this case of infantine battery or not, she had no opportunity of answering the indictment, for scarcely had Mr. Shuttleworth done speaking, when the startled door flew open, and Sir Otto de Beauvoir entered with his eye glass dangling from his neck, and a studied smile harrowing his rouged and withered cheek.

"My dear Lady Bloomsbury," he said, pressing

her ladyship's hand with deep feeling, "I am delighted, truly delighted to see you; it was by mere accident I heard you were here; by mere accident. Ladies—Miss Bloomsbury, Miss Laura, Miss Shuttleworth, I presume. Excuse my abrupt intrusion, sir. I have to apologize, but being in the neighbourhood of your very picturesque and interesting mansion, I could not, positively could not, resist the temptation of calling to shake hands with my dear friend, Lady Bloomsbury."

"We are all extremely glad to see you, Sir Otto," replied Lady Bloomsbury, "but I was not aware that you contemplated returning to England so soon."

"I did not originally contemplate returning so soon," said Sir Otto, "not quite so soon, but owing to the sudden and alarming indisposition of my mother; in consequence of that—"

"Is your mother living?" asked Helen incredulously.

"O! dear yes," replied Sir Otto, displaying a complete set of artificial teeth beautifully enamelled.

"She must be very old, Sir Otto," said Laura, and she coughed gently into her handkerchief.

"O! dear no," cried Sir Otto with an air of alarm, "no member of our family, so far as our domestic traditions extend, has been famed for longevity. My grandfather died at fifty-two, my great-grandfather at fifty-one, and I don't think, nay, I am quite confident upon this point, that the age of my oldest ancestor during the last five generations, the very oldest, has exceeded fifty-five: it is a fact, I assure you."

"Poor Sir Otto!" whispered Laura to her cousin, "I fear, Mary, we must see about preparing our mourning."

"And what do you really think of Italy, Sir Otto?" inquired Lady Bloomsbury.

"Italy!" replied Sir Otto, forming an arch with his fingers so as to display the numerous rings with which they were adorned, "Italy! what can I say of Italy, but what has been said a thousand times before? It is a charming water-colour drawing. If you would have a specimen of scene painting, go to Switzerland, the Tyrol, and the Rhine, for scene painting only; or if you prefer a sketch in sepia, where can you find a better than

'By those lakes whose gloomy shore
Skylark seldom warbles o'er.'

Ireland? but Italy is Turner himself in the zenith of his fame—Turner before, with an eccentricity pardonable in one of his great genius, he took to painting in coloured spectacles."

"And of course," observed Lady Bloomsbury, "you meet with the best society."

"Precisely," returned the knight, with a furtive glance at his polished boot, in which his wig was mirrored; "there was an English nobleman, Lord—Lord Petersham. I don't know whether you are familiar with the name? a modern creation, I believe."

Lady Bloomsbury shook her head mournfully, and desired Laura to reach her reticule.

"To whom I was introduced," continued Sir Otto, "by a mutual friend, a very accomplished man indeed, extremely so; gave three hundred guineas for a very very small painting by Cuyp. You saw in the papers, I dare say, an account of that melancholy catastrophe in which he lost his life?"

"Your friend, Sir Otto," said Laura, who always felt a malicious pleasure in misunderstanding the knight of the patent ventilating peruke.

"No—yes! that is, my friend Lord Petersham," replied Sir Otto, smiling with increased amiability, "not my other friend."

"I heard something of the circumstance to which you allude," observed Mr. Shuttleworth, playing with a pinch of snuff between his finger and thumb, "he is dead then?"

"And gone, it is hoped, to his account," added Lady Bloomsbury in a tone of deep emotion.

"It appears," pursued Otto, somewhat surprised at the sensation which his remarks had produced, for he had no reason to presume that either Mr. Shuttleworth or his sister had any personal knowledge of Lord Petersham: "It appears that his lordship embarked in a small vessel at Palermo, intending to proceed from thence to one of the Mediterranean islands. Unfortunately, they were overtaken by a violent storm; the vessel was thrown upon the rocks, and every soul perished. His lordship's body was subsequently washed ashore, and buried in the cemetery at Naples, where a very handsome marble tablet has been placed, in commemoration of the melancholy event. I fancy that his nephew succeeds to the title, Lord Petersham never having been married."

Sir Otto paused, not so much for a reply, as with astonishment at observing Lady Bloomsbury rise from her chair, and, supported by her daughter Helen, retire from the apartment, apparently overcome by feelings to which Sir Otto found it difficult to assign any adequate provocation.

"I hope, Mr. Shuttleworth," said Sir Otto, approaching that gentleman with an expression of real concern, "I sincerely hope that nothing which has inadvertently fallen from my lips—"

Mr. Shuttleworth shrugged his shoulders, and perceiving that they were left alone, observed with a sigh, "what is past may be forgiven, is forgiven, so far as I am concerned, but cannot be so easily forgotten; had my deceased sister, Margaret, never met this Lord Petersham, it would have been better for all parties; however, it is useless to rake up old grievances; he has gone. *Requiescat in pace.*"

Mr. Shuttleworth uttered these words with considerable emotion, which greatly increased the embarrassment of Sir Otto de Beauvoir, who prided himself upon his infallible tact and delicacy, and would rather, at any time, have gone a mile out of his way than have committed a *contretemps* that might lacerate the feelings of a worm. He again assured Mr. Shuttleworth, in the most earnest manner, that he deeply regretted having been the innocent agent in producing so much uneasiness, and was proceeding to entreat Mr. Shuttleworth to tender on his behalf a thousand apologies to his dear friend, Lady Bloomsbury, for what had transpired, when the current of his impassioned eloquence was arrested by a chaise and four dashing up to the portico of Shuttleworth Hall. "Who could this be?" was the natural inquiry which suggested itself to three inquisitive young ladies who suddenly presented themselves at the parlour window, from which position they commanded a view of the vehicle and its unknown occupant, who, having been shown into the library, and requested an audience of Mr.

Shuttleworth, that gentleman instantly proceeded thither, leaving poor Sir Otto de Beauvoir suffering most acutely from the stings of self reproach.

"I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Shuttleworth," said the stranger, a tall figure enveloped in an ample travelling cloak, and with somewhat of the gravity of the Spaniard in his sallow countenance.

"My business," he said, in answer to Mr. Shuttleworth's request for information upon that point, "will cause you, probably, some surprise. I presume the name of Petersham is not altogether unknown to you? If I am rightly informed, your sister, Miss Margaret Shuttleworth, was privately married, some thirty years ago, to that nobleman?"

"I have reason to believe she was," replied Mr. Shuttleworth; "but, as you are a perfect stranger to me, perhaps you will excuse my asking your motive for these inquiries?"

"You will understand my motive, when I inform you that I am the issue of that marriage. In a word—I am Lord Petersham."

If Mr. Shuttleworth had been suddenly stricken dumb, by some wizard's potent spell, he could not have gone through the pantomime of incredulous amazement with more dramatic power than he displayed on hearing this announcement. The intensity of it, like Kean's Othello, was appalling.

"My nephew!" he gasped, slowly recovering his breath, but still maintaining a fixed attitude, while the rolling mists of doubt gradually dispersed, and the sunshine of confidence spread over his teeming imagination:—"but what proofs," he demanded—"what proofs are there of this marriage?"

"My father's declaration in his own hand-writing, which you shall see, and which document also establishes my claim to the title as his representative—read that, sir."

"Not now," panted Mr. Shuttleworth, taking the document from his lordship with delightful trepidation; "I am satisfied—perfectly satisfied:" then opening the library-door he desired a servant to send Miss Shuttleworth to him instantly.

"Mary, my love," said Mr. Shuttleworth smiling tenderly as his daughter appeared before him—"Your cousin, Lord Petersham:" then turning to his nephew—"My daughter, Miss Shuttleworth, Lord Petersham."

Mr. Shuttleworth only waited to see the cousins join hands, when sinking into a chair, apparently exhausted by the tumult of his emotions, he endeavoured to collect his scattered thoughts, by perusing the testamentary paper, which contained Lord Petersham's acknowledgment of his marriage with Margaret Shuttleworth in a feigned name, and of the subsequent birth of a son, to whom, if living, he bequeathed his entire property—if dead, then his estates were to pass to his noble relative—Lord Clarence Linford.

"It is quite needless for me to tell you what pleasure this introduction affords me, my dear cousin—if you will allow me to use that term," said his lordship, addressing Mary Shuttleworth with an air of respectful gallantry, not altogether unmixed with condescension; "we have been strangers for some years—I trust we shall no longer continue so."

A faint blush mantled on Mary's cheek, as smiling she said,—“Cousins certainly ought not to be strangers to each other.”

"Such is my feeling," replied Lord Petersham; "and, in defiance of those prejudices which are vulgarly considered inseparable from our order, I shall always deem it an honour to be so nearly related to one whose virtues, I have heard, diffuse a lustre which is something more than nominal.—Excuse me at present, I have a communication to make of some importance to my uncle, and my time is limited." Taking the hint so politely conveyed, Miss Shuttleworth withdrew.

During the above conversation, Mr. Shuttleworth continued reading with avidity the interesting statement which, while it vindicated the fair fame of his sister Margaret, pleasantly raised him to the proud position of legitimate uncle to a peer of the realm.

When Mr. Shuttleworth had finished his labours, and before he could obey the first impulse of his idolatrous nature—that of dropping on his knees and kissing his nephew's ennobled hand—Lord Petersham addressed him in these words:—

"You will doubtless, sir, be desirous to know by what channel these papers came into my possession—a few words will explain it. My mother died within a twelvemonth after her marriage, which, as you are aware, was contracted by Lord Petersham in a fictitious name, from, I believe, the most laudable motives, and to prevent the injurious consequences to himself and his children, with which publicity during his father's life-time would certainly have been attended. On my mother's death, I was committed to the care of a person named Brandon, whose husband was a dealer in ship's-stores at Gosport. I remained with these people till I was twelve years of age, when, by the per-

suasion of a companion who, like myself, was of a somewhat roving disposition, I ran away from my foster-parents, if I may so term them, and went to sea in the humble capacity of a cabin-boy, on board a merchant-vessel bound to Guadaloupe. Before I had been many days in my new situation, I found reason to repent of the step which I had taken. There happened, however, to be a gentleman on board whose favourable regard, by some means or other, I was fortunate enough to secure. He was going to settle at Mexico as a surgeon, where he had a brother residing—and offered, if I could release myself from my present engagement, to take me as his apprentice. I accepted his offer, and continued with him for a period of ten or twelve years, when he died, leaving me his business, which was worth between four and five hundred a year. The climate, however, not being congenial to my health, I disposed of my practice and returned to Europe. After some time spent in Paris, I proceeded on a tour through Italy, when, taking up a newspaper one morning, I read of the melancholy disaster by which my father lost his life. I was then at Genoa. I hastened to Naples, and reached there on the day appointed for my father's funeral. On inquiry, I ascertained that various articles belonging to my father, including his papers, had been seized by his valet, who had absconded. I, however, with some assistance from the authorities, managed to recover the papers, amongst which I discovered the document you have just read, together with some tablets which I understand were found upon my father, when his lifeless body was washed ashore, and which, apart from any personal interest which attaches to them,

present one of the most remarkable instances of self-possession, under circumstances of an appalling character, that can possibly be imagined. The concluding words were evidently written but a few seconds before their unfortunate author was hurried into eternity. I will read these notes, which are necessarily brief, if you will allow me?"

Mr. Shuttleworth nodded assent; his heart, as he gazed in dream-like rapture on his noble nephew, was too full for speech, and Lord Petersham proceeded as follows:—

"There is no hope!—A rock, and a rising tide!—The night is past; and such a night!—those shrieks!—I fancy I hear them now, as if the voice of woman and child was piercing the wilderness of waves, which has closed over them for ever. * * A rock, and a rising tide!—The sun shines cheerily on the sparkling sea and vessels—I have counted seven which have passed us, but too far off to notice our miserable signal—the waving of a handkerchief. There is no hope!—I thought at first this horrible conviction would have driven me mad—now I am calm, calm as the waters, which, like a subtle smiling fiend, are climbing up insidiously to kiss my honourable lips. Strange! my nerves are as firm as the stone which serves me both for bed and bolster. I feel even as if I could jest—jest with my toe as it were in the jaws of Death, soon to become a most unwholesome pickle—horrible!—In one hour—less than one hour, if no aid come—till then, I must kill time with my pencil * * *

"My companions are a Sicilian officer and his wife. Poor woman!—she sits with her large dark eyes raised to Heaven—her naked child dead in her

lap—both awfully quiet. He is a fine manly fellow—how his breast heaves as he gazes in silence on his silent wife. 'There is no hope!—I see it in the cold perspiration on his forehead—I hear it in those half-suppressed groans, which issue through his fixed teeth as if something was gnawing at his heart. It is a picture which Travers would admire—so could I—in the *Louvre*—but here, with the wind blowing in my face, and my boots full of water—I cannot do it. * * *

"There is no hope. Still a rock, and still a rising tide. My watch points to twenty minutes past ten. Travers is at breakfast, smiling over the *charivari*. At eleven it will be high water, and the rock will be seen no more. Yet I am calm, desperately calm, though my throat is as hot as fire, and my memory, how clear! I can remember casting a stone at an old man at college. It must be thirty years ago. I wish my hand had withered when I stooped to pick it up. And Margaret S——. Would to heaven we had never met! Yet I loved her. True, I woo'd and married her by perjury. O! that some kind demon had cut out my tongue, before I could give utterance to that lie. It is too late now; yet, if these leaves should ever reach the living world, let it be known that the last dying wish of my heart is, to atone, by this acknowledgment, for the wrong done to an innocent woman. If my son yet lives, he will find ample justice rendered to his mother and himself amongst the papers in my writing desk at Turin."

The moment Lord Petersham had finished, Mr. Shuttleworth rose, and placing his trembling hand upon his nephew's arm, he said in a voice faint with

emotion, "This is the proudest—the happiest moment of my existence: come, let me introduce you to your aunt!"

His lordship politely declined this invitation. He had but just arrived in England. His engagements were numerous and pressing. His claim to the title would most likely be contested, and though he entertained the fullest assurance of ultimate success, still it was an undertaking demanding energy, judgment, and dauntless resolution. (Money he did not mention, probably because it has a plebeian sound). He had powerful opponents (*vide* "Burke's Peerage" *passim*), to contend with, and he must lose no time in marshalling his forces in battle array. He promised, however, to dine with Mr. Shuttleworth on the following day, and, consoled by this anticipated honour, Mr. Shuttleworth accompanied him to his carriage; and as he pressed his hand for the last time, with moistened eyes, bestowed upon his beloved nephew a heartfelt benediction.

When Mr. Shuttleworth returned to his study, he had become an altered man entirely. His real identity was annihilated, as much so as a house whose interior has been destroyed by fire, leaving only its bare walls standing. In person he was still the fine old English gentleman he had ever been, but in spirit he was, as compared with his former self, a new creature, or more properly, an old creature newly revived. The vernal freshness of his political youth had been restored to him. He was no longer an unbeliever in the different qualities of men. He had forsaken heresy, and embraced a creed consistent with his changed position as the uncle of a peer. Still, the process of conversion, like all good works, had not been effected without a

struggle and a pang. When he looked back, and saw how far he had wandered from the narrow path which his forefathers had trod, and which he himself had traversed for so many years ; till, suddenly struck by mental insanity (from which he had now perfectly recovered), he left it to pursue an *ignis fatuus*—Nicholas Shuttleworth felt humbled and abashed in his own presence. Before the judgment seat of his indignant conscience, he stood like an undefended culprit, while the political errors of his past life pressed forward like grisly phantoms, to give evidence against him. His discarded Jacobinism stared him, spectre-like, in the face. The sense of his great iniquity penetrated him to the quick. Never, of those whom parochial vengeance has pursued for the desertion of wife and children, was such a frightful example made, as of Nicholas Shuttleworth for absconding from his party, and leaving his faith and principles totally unprovided for. O ! miserable humanity, that men cannot change their professions as eels their skins, lobsters their shells, women their worshippers, without becoming a thorn unto themselves, a stumbling-block to their friends, and an object of spiteful derision to their enemies.

In the heyday of his Jacobinism, Shuttleworth had sneered at civic dignities. In his insane detestation of municipal pomp, he had bestowed his aldermanic gown upon a miserable monkey. The penitent Shuttleworth sighed deeply when he reflected upon this wanton insolence, this outrage upon the deep reverential feelings which all well-balanced minds entertain for constitutional authority. What course now remained for him but to retrace his steps as speedily, yet as softly, as circum-

stances would allow, with his arms crossed, pilgrim-wise, upon his breast, and *peccavi* quivering on his lip. Poor Shuttleworth's position was that of a man who, having quitted a friendly party with ill-mannerly expressions of contempt, finds, on getting to the street door, a drenching shower of rain, and is constrained to go back and politely solicit from his *quondam* associates, the favour of allowing him to walk home under their umbrellas.

The sensation which Lady Bloomsbury evinced on being made acquainted with the providential discovery of her nephew, Lord Petersham, was neither so vast nor so gratifying as Mr. Shuttleworth had fondly expected. In the first place, notwithstanding that far-reaching benevolence which could embrace the most distant of South-Sea Islands, and minister to its educational necessities, Lady Bloomsbury could not forgive the elder Petersham for having contracted a clandestine marriage with her deluded sister Margaret. In her jealous observance of the forms and ceremonies of the "best society," bride cake, favours, chocolate (not omitting of course a preliminary paragraph in the *Morning Post*) were deemed essential elements of the noble institution of matrimony, as by law established. In the second place, Lady Bloomsbury could not participate in those feelings of self-gratulation, by which Mr. Shuttleworth was so vividly inspired. She had always been true to her principles—had never even for a thoughtless moment cherished any jacobinical predilections, and had been too long identified with the *haut-noblesse* to be surprised into a tone of vulgar exultation at an event from which she could not possibly derive

any accession of dignity—for surely the *widow* of a baronet might take precedence of the *aunt* of a peer.

In the last and most important place, Lady Bloomsbury felt persuaded that her vain and ambitious brother Nicholas would never rest until he had brought about an alliance between Lord Petersham and his daughter Mary, notwithstanding he knew that her affections were engaged elsewhere.

For all these, and sundry other good and sufficient reasons, Lady Bloomsbury continued perfectly calm, while Mr. Shuttleworth was in such a ridiculous flutter, that he could scarcely be persuaded to sit to take tea. Though certainly not prejudiced in the young nobleman's favour, Lady Bloomsbury was nevertheless prepared to give Lord Petersham a fair trial, upon his own merits ; and, if considered expedient, to play off her daughter Helen, immediately that Captain Hip-pesley's chance of succeeding to the title and possessions of his uncle, old Lord Kew, should be pronounced by a competent actuary decidedly problematical.

CHAPTER III.

Let Gilpin boast his fam'd equine excursion,
Our modern riders yield no less diversion
With souls, as much superior to Button's,
As wit to wisdom—epicures to gluttons.

THE GALLOPADE.

THE following morning was ushered in with notes of unwonted preparation. Lady Bloomsbury and her daughters had arranged with themselves to attend the races, whither, on being apprised of their intention, Sir Otto de Beauvoir gallantly volunteered to accompany them. Mary Shuttleworth was of course to form one of the party. As for Mr. Shuttleworth, he had sufficient to occupy and absorb all his time and faculties without perplexing himself about handicaps and sweepstakes. The pressure of mental anxiety, induced by having to provide a sumptuous dinner in honour of his noble nephew, Lord Petersham, was severe enough in all conscience,—and to superintend the getting up of five courses, and a dessert, involved an amount of toil, and an intensity of application, which those who were merely interested in the running for cups and plates on a race-course, could scarcely be expected to estimate at their proper value.

Before Mary departed, Mr. Shuttleworth took an opportunity of speaking a few judicious words to her in private.

E.

He commenced naturally enough by asking her what she thought of her cousin Lord Petersham.

"He may not be what is commonly termed handsome," said Mr. Shuttleworth; "but there is intellect impressed upon his countenance most decidedly."

"Almost too much so, I think," replied Mary, making some unnecessary adjustment of her bracelet.

"Oh, no, that's impossible," returned Mr. Shuttleworth; "a man can't have too much intellect, especially when you consider his high position."

"I thought you were speaking of his looks only," said Mary, her attention still occupied by the untractable bracelet.

"Well!" rejoined Mr. Shuttleworth, "you would not like your cousin any better for looking like a booby, I suppose?"

"I don't think—I am sure I should not," said Mary, somewhat embarrassed, and evidently afraid of being misunderstood.

"His tone and address," resumed Mr. Shuttleworth, summing up his lordship's characteristics with judicial gravity, "appearance, manner, and deportment, are those of a well-bred man of the world; not haughty or distant, beyond what is fitting for his rank, but just sufficiently so to prevent improper familiarity:—what were you about to observe?"

"Nothing," returned Mary with a slight cough, "further than that I see no particular fault in Lord Petersham."

"Your cousin, you mean," said Mr. Shuttleworth, looking upwards, "my nephew." He paused for a moment as if engaged in mental thanksgiving, and

then, suddenly recollecting himself, said to his daughter,—“By-the-bye, Walter Brandon will not be here to-day.”

“Not here to-day, papa?” cried Mary, releasing her hold of the perplexing bracelet.

“I have just sent a letter off to him to that effect,” replied Mr. Shuttleworth; “the vessel in which he was to have gone out to Demerara will not be ready for sailing till the middle of next month, and I have therefore secured him a passage in another, which will leave Portsmouth in a day or two.”

“So soon, papa?” said Mary, who appeared somewhat frightened at this mysterious expedition.

“Why, yes,” returned Mr. Shuttleworth, rising from his chair; “the business on which we send him will not admit of delay—in fact, every hour increases the difficulties which prevent our coming to a settlement with our consignees.”

“I hope,” said Mary, who by this time had become unusually pale—“I hope that Walter has done nothing to offend you, papa?”

“Offend me!” cried Mr. Shuttleworth, looking at his daughter as if surprised at her suggestion. “Oh dear, no: Brandon is, so far as I know, a young man of unquestionable integrity. He has always done his business well in the counting-house, and we have never found any cause for complaint; still, perhaps, taking all things into consideration, I have done more for that young man than was altogether prudent on my part, or desirable on his own.”

“In what way, papa?” said Mary, with a calm but serious expression.

"By fostering a spirit of pride—which is not only objectionable in itself, but inconsistent with his situation in life."

"I never saw any pride in Walter, papa," replied Mary, her voice losing that firmness which doubtless belonged to her opinion.

"Perhaps not," rejoined Mr. Shuttleworth coolly, "young women are not generally the first to notice such things: what I should call pride, you might probably consider nothing more than becoming gentility,—but you must remember when I took young Brandon under my protection, he was a poor homeless, friendless boy—he was found in the streets in a state of the most abject destitution, and brought before me at the Town Hall, where I was then sitting as senior alderman. I inquired into his history, and learned that in consequence of the cruel treatment he had experienced from his father, he had been induced to leave his home, and had wandered about, gaining a precarious livelihood—not by begging—the boy was too proud to beg—but by doing any little odd things for the farmers,—such as scaring birds from a corn-field, gathering turnips, and so forth. Feeling interested in the boy, and perceiving that for his age he was a rather intelligent lad—instead of sending him to jail as a rogue and vagabond as I might, and others probably would have done, I placed him at school—what's the matter, Mary?"

"Nothing, papa," replied the poor tender-hearted girl, withdrawing her hand from beneath her veil, which had fallen, inadvertently of course, while her father was telling his favourite story.

"I placed the boy at school," pursued Mr. Shuttleworth, stimulating his memory with a pinch

of snuff—"gave him an education much superior, I fear, to what a youth of his obscure origin, and with no expectations whatever—disowned by his parents, and entirely dependent on my bounty,—should properly have received.—Mary, my love, are you attending to me?"

There was a short pause—and then a sound penetrated through the veil, not unlike that which accompanies a stifled sob.

"Yes, papa," replied Mary, picking up her handkerchief, which had dropt on the carpet.

"It is fit and proper, Mary, that you, and indeed every one, should know the exact position in which Walter Brandon now stands with relation to myself, in order that I may not be accused hereafter of having neglected any part of my self-imposed duty. Well! at fourteen years of age he was taken into my counting-house, at some inconvenience, and not altogether with the approbation of my partners, who felt probably a natural distrust of one whose antecedents, to speak mildly, had been so unpromising. However, from complaisance to me, they waived their objections, and from that time to this, Walter Brandon has remained in our employ.—As I stated before, he does his business well, is attentive and diligent, though I have sometimes perceived a tendency to—I scarcely know what to call it—self-will, pride, or rashness; for instance, when we proposed sending him out to Demerara, he seemed to hesitate about complying with our wishes."

"Was he to stay there long?" inquired Mary, with as much disinterestedness as her native sincerity would allow her to assume.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied Mr.

Shuttleworth, emphatically ; “ very much upon circumstances : but supposing he *should* stay any considerable time—what then ? ”

“ He might be apprehensive of the climate,” said Mary rather faintly, and casting a look of compassion on the bracelet, whose opposite members she had so long been endeavouring to unite.

“ Pooh ! ” said Mr. Shuttleworth ; “ however, he has undertaken the commission with which we propose to intrust him,—and I had invited him here to-day, to make the final arrangements for his departure, but Lord Petersham, having promised us the honour of his company, of course prevents me from attending to anything in the shape of business.”

“ But Walter—that is Mr. Brandon’s presence,” said Mary, “ need not interfere with your attention to Lord Petersham.”

“ I admit that,” returned Mr. Shuttleworth ; “ but, on the other hand, what occasion is there for Walter coming at all, unless it be in reference to matters of business. I know nothing of him, Mary, you will understand, in any other character. True, I have once or twice told him, that, if he thought proper to drop in of a Sunday, he would find a knife and fork laid for him : but he must not presume, from my perhaps injudicious courtesy, to place himself upon the footing of an equal.—Every man should know his position, and keep it—every young man of right feeling does so.”

“ I thought we were all equal,” said Mary, in a faint tone.

“ It happens singularly enough,” observed Mr. Shuttleworth, without heeding the fallacy for which his own pernicious example was partly responsible,

—"it happens that young Brandon's mother was foster-mother to Lord Petersham."

"They are acquainted, then," cried Mary, her countenance brightening like the sky after an April shower; "how delighted they would be to meet again, after so long a separation."

"Far from it," replied Mr. Shuttleworth, dogmatically; "you must remember young Brandon ran away from his home."

"So did Lord Petersham: did he not, papa?"

"Ah! that's quite a different thing, my nephew being the son—the eldest and only son of a peer, and in independent circumstances, was of course at liberty to follow the bent of his own inclination. I could never approve, however, of a son repudiating his parent's protection—(ill-treatment is a very equivocal excuse: the boy was whipped; most likely he deserved it) and feeling that Lord Petersham's sentiments upon this point must be identical with my own, I wrote this morning to Brandon, to prevent his coming, and spare both his lordship and himself unnecessary pain."

This mode of reasoning, though very neat and ingenious, Mary could not clearly understand; and, notwithstanding she seldom or never impugned any of her papa's favourite crotchets, she could not avoid suggesting that Lord Petersham must either be very proud and unamiable, or be very much gratified at meeting an old acquaintance, a school-fellow, playmate, and foster-brother. The latter proposition Mr. Shuttleworth would not entertain for an instant: it was impossible, he reiterated, that Lord Petersham could, would, or ought to be gratified at such an occurrence—quite impossible; and as to the other dilemma, his nephew might be

proud, he perceived no trace of it : but he might be so, and not without warranty, as a glance at his genealogical tree, in full foliage, would amply demonstrate : but as to his being unamiable, it was not in his noble nature. The Petershams, he observed, were celebrated in history for the *suaviter in modo* ; and at the battle of Agincourt, where a scion of that chivalrous family commanded a body of archers, the Honourable Rufus de Petersham had all his arrows tipped with silver, out of compliment to the French gentlemen to whom they were duly assigned, as part and parcel of their personal property.

Mary said no more. The dark shadow of approaching destiny overspread the landscape which fancy had painted in such glowing hues, and the tender blossoms of her young love, shrinking at the icy breath of parental ambition, in the very spring-tide of their joy, rustled to their fall.

Mr. Shuttleworth, notwithstanding his attempts to conceal it, felt somewhat embarrassed by Mary's silence. He could not avoid perceiving the painful emotions which he had excited in discharging, what he deemed a sacred duty to himself and daughter ; nor did he find much difficulty in accounting for Mary's marked antipathy to her cousin—Lord Petersham. The immediate removal of Walter Brandon from Mary's vicinity was requisite to prevent Mr. Shuttleworth's most cherished plans from being frustrated. While that dangerous person had access to Shuttleworth Hall, its owner felt it utterly impossible to nourish, in comfort, his dreams of anticipated dignity. With this conviction he retired, leaving Mary to her solitary meditations—a luxury, however, which, highly as she prized it, the

poor girl was not permitted long to enjoy; her fashionable cousins, Laura and Helen, with Lady Bloomsbury, claiming her for their own, and all things being in readiness, Mary accompanied them in their carriage to the races at —, striving to forget the past, and compelled—so great was her fear of exciting suspicion—to look upon the desolation of her hopes with a beaming eye, and a heavy, if not aching heart. Poor girl! she would sooner have died than Laura should have found her guilty of being in love, however strong might have been her accuser's generous recommendation to mercy.

Let it not be imagined that Lady Bloomsbury so far neglected the requirements of the best society, as to take any interest in those equestrian exercises which allured so many from their domestic privacy. A purer and more respectable motive animated Lady Bloomsbury, than any which the admiration of mere brute force could possibly supply. It had been publicly announced that his highness the Grand Duke of Schoffenspitzhoffel would be present, and that circumstance affording sufficient warrant for the simultaneous attendance of the *haut-ton*, Lady Bloomsbury felt it was only consistent with a proper sense of her maternal obligations, and the sacred trust which devolved upon her as the natural guardian of two highly accomplished daughters, to conduct them to the orbit of fashion, where she flattered herself those 'heavenly bodies' (not to speak it profanely) would confer a lustre, peculiarly their own, upon the most brilliant and exclusive of aristocratic constellations.

But if Lady Bloomsbury entertained any scruples as to the propriety of her present proceedings, they were removed by a consideration entirely distinct


from either pride or curiosity. She was desirous of meeting with Captain Hippeasley upon what might be termed 'neutral ground;' for it must be borne in mind that Lady Bloomsbury, with the sagacity of an experienced tactician, had not at present determined upon breaking off all communication between Helen and the captain—far from it. In old Lord Kew's precarious condition, both physically and matrimonially, a temporising policy was best adapted to accomplish the important object, which absorbed so much of Lady Bloomsbury's attention, and therefore, while she deemed it prudent not to be entirely 'at home' to the suitor of doubtful pretensions, she thought that no great danger could result from her humanely bestowing upon the captain so much encouragement only as would prevent him from sinking into absolute despair—like a wily angler, who, having hooked his fish, gives him sufficient line to enable him to revel in the delusion of independence, yet retains the power of bringing him to land whenever it may be deemed convenient and desirable.

Lady Bloomsbury's carriage, with its beautiful occupants, had just taken up a position which commanded a favourable view of the grand stand, when, on the extensive balcony of that establishment, there suddenly appeared a remarkable looking personage, with a dusky visage, and black moustachios, in the form of a horse, or rather pony shoe. On beholding this illustrious individual, the excited mob saluted him with deafening cheers, in return for which the distinguished foreigner took off his hat, bowed, and exhibited a splendid row of teeth, of the true oriental diminutiveness and brilliancy. Flattered by this courteous acknowledgment, the multitude

again distressed their manly throats, till they made the welkin ring with their inharmonious chorus, when some malicious person, who carried on business as an itinerant pleman, sneeringly informed the enthusiastic band, that the individual upon whom all these extravagant compliments had been lavished, was nothing more than a common member of parliament! This severe blow and great damper upon hero-worship, caused the *vox populi* to assume quite a different tone in a wonderfully short space of time; for when the tawny-complexioned impostor, who had momentarily retired, again presented himself to public observation, he was thunderstruck at finding himself assailed by a volley of execrations. Indeed, the hunch-backed man, who had been most vehement in his applause, was so exasperated at the deception which had been practised upon him, that he flung a large apple at the head of the unprincipled M. P., for which ebullition of honest indignation he was instantly seized upon by the authorities in attendance. The necessary consequence of this infraction of a public privilege, was a refreshing *melée*. Sticks and constables' staves waltzed wildly together in the air, but notwithstanding a desperate resistance, and a violent attempt at rescue, the old antagonism of might against right terminated as usual, and the little deformed victim of unmerited persecution was hurried away to 'durance vile, with vain but patriotic appeals to his countrymen for sympathy, stones, and succour.

The excitement provoked by this barbarous coercion of the subject had just reached its climax, when cries were heard of "They're off," accompanied by an universal murmur of expectation, resembling the distant surging of a mighty ocean. But

expectation on this, as on many other occasions, was doomed to encounter, and be overcome by disappointment. *They* were not off; but one was, whose feats of horsemanship promised to afford the million much more diversion, and equal edification. This was Sir Otto de Beauvoir, whose thorough-boned charger (sister to Rosinante), by some strange perversion of cause and effect, instead of conveying alarm to others, as might have been expected from her ossified aspect, had already taken fright herself, and along the vacant race-course she came, at a scampering pace, and followed by a ruck of forty or fifty horsemen, all shouting, till they were as red in the face as Calmuck Tartars. For some moments, Sir Otto kept his seat as became a man who felt that the eyes of Europe were upon him, and was sensible of what was due to the rigidity of his personal attractions. At length, however, perceiving that Rosinante's sister rather increased than slackened her pace, as she approached the critical 'corner,' Sir Otto's fears prevailed over his elegance, and, with his legs bent behind him at right angles, he laid himself lovingly forward, and insured his life by clutching his horse's mane with the desperation of a maniac. Hat and patent ventilating peruke were soon numbered among the things of the past: a cry of terror broke from ladies—uncertain—aged and young. Sir Otto felt that he was a lost man; the great secret was now revealed; he was as bald as an unweaned babe. Yet, even in that trying hour, he could not forget that he had been, and still was, the 'observed of all observers:' cruelly galled and harassed as he was, with annihilation staring him in the face, he recked not of the solemn mysteries of futurity, and thought only of what the



‘world would say,’ when it looked upon his horribly disfigured corpse, and fancied, even then, he heard a wild yell of derision with which myriads greeted the discovery of his false hips, and his artificial leggings.

But Rosinante’s sister had exhausted her powers (she had galloped a full mile), when a yelping dog, crossing the course, threw her off her guard, and having a similar effect on Sir Otto’s equilibrium, the former stumbled, and the knight, performing a somersault over her ears, fell as gracefully on his back as if he had been projected there by an accomplished Cornish wrestler.

“Don’t disturb me,” said the knight, raising his pensive eyes, and addressing the crowd which was gathering round him. “I am not hurt; allow me to rest for a few minutes; how is my poor mare?”

“Oh! all her bones is right enough, you may discover that with your eye,” said a lucifer merchant, who, having caught the fugitive, led her back by the bridle, shivering in every limb.

“Thank you! I am much obliged,” said Sir Otto; then closing his lids, he seemed to be reflecting on the exposed state of his pericranium, for when he opened them again, he said faintly, “Has any one seen my hat, and—and—the *lining*?”

“Is this yours, sir?” inquired a shoeless vendor of ballads (six yards for a penny), approaching with Sir Otto’s dishevelled wig in his hand.

Sir Otto gazed on his peruke with a wry face, and attempted to place it on his head, but the exertion proved too much for him, and he was obliged to request his humble friend, the ballad-seller, to be so good as to perform the necessary office, which he

did with tolerable success, considering that he made no pretensions to the science of a professed valet; but was sorely vexed when he found that his labours were rewarded by a shout of laughter from the thoughtless crowd, who had no conception how difficult it was to be-wig an elderly gentleman so as to prevent him from looking like an intelligent scare-crow.

Sir Otto, raised to his legs, and supported by two or three officious thimble-rig men, was eventually conducted to the adjacent carriage of Lady Bloomsbury, by whom he was received with marks of the greatest commiseration, and a seat provided for him less perilous than that from which he had been so recently ejected. His horse, having been taken in charge by Lady Bloomsbury's footman, who was entreated by Sir Otto to ride with tenderness, the knight felt himself sufficiently recovered to give a circumstantial account of the accident which had befallen him; and which he had scarcely completed when Laura, catching her mama's arm, with much animation, pointed to two gentlemen on horseback, who had just passed them, and of whom the tallest and handsomest had the appearance of a fashionable young country squire.

"There's Horace along with Mr. Inglewood," cried Laura, in a state of sparkling excitement.

Scarcely were the words uttered, when Mr. Inglewood, turning round to laugh at a gipsy girl, who had addressed him *en passant*, was startled into a recognition of Lady Bloomsbury and family.

"Dear me!" said Laura, "how serious poor Captain Hippeley looks; but he never looks otherwise, I think."

"He looks like a gentleman, which is more than

can be said of his companion," returned Helen; "no one, I'm sure, would take *him* for a solicitor."

Laura glanced at her sister reproachfully, and blushed. Happily for the peace of society, there was no opportunity for making reprisals, or Laura would not have allowed this ungracious remark to pass without exchanging it for one as bitter, certainly, if not as firmly founded on facts.

Captain Hipplesey, a thin, dark-eyed young man, of seven or eight-and-twenty, rather under the middle stature, with features less prepossessing than expressive, addressed Lady Bloomsbury with an air of deferential courtesy, and Helen with something like a constrained smile, as if he but seldom indulged in relaxation of that nature, and never but with conscientious care and moderation.

"My friend Mr. Inglewood I think you have seen before," he said, turning to the solicitor as an inducement for that gentleman to cast off the bashful hesitation which prevented him from coming forward, and caused him to look wistfully over his companion's shoulder.

"Oh! yes," cried Laura, delightedly, "at Cheltenham, where Mr. Inglewood distinguished himself greatly as a member of the toxophilite club; don't you remember, mama?"

Lady Bloomsbury had some vague recollection of the circumstance, but nothing more. The fact was, that her ladyship did not deem it prudent to honour Mr. Inglewood with more than a qualified recognition; for, while his manners were by no means quite *comme il faut*, his eligibility, in a more important point of view, required better attestation than any mere 'rural solicitor' could supply, without

private property in possession or expectancy. Under these circumstances, her ladyship judiciously decided on taking up a neutral position, and though she gave no positive encouragement to the solicitor's advances, she tacitly permitted Laura to educe his sentiments at her own free will, in which undertaking that accomplished artiste was assiduously engaged, when a smart shower of rain suddenly interrupted the ingenious process, and relieved Lady Bloomsbury from the post of observation, which she had hitherto so vigilantly maintained.

The gentlemen, being un-Macintoshed, were about to tender their hasty *adieux*, when Laura whispered her mama, and Lady Bloomsbury, nodding acquiescence, informed Captain Hippesley that she was at present on a visit to her brother, Mr. Shuttleworth, of Shuttleworth Hall, and begged that he and Mr. Inglewood would accompany them thither if they had no prior engagement. Captain Hippesley boasted of some slight acquaintance with the worthy owner of Shuttleworth Hall, and though Lawyer Inglewood was not so fortunate, he had no hesitation in availing himself of Lady Bloomsbury's hospitable invitation. On reaching the Hall, they were both cordially welcomed by Mr. Shuttleworth, and introduced, with all due ceremony, to his noble nephew, Lord Petersham, who had already arrived, and was engaged in conversation with the celebrated Dr. Hedgehog, M.D., and the Rev. Mr. Bleat, in whose praise it is sufficient to observe, that he had the smallest hand and foot, wore the largest brilliant, and assumed the most 'eloquent smile,' of all the young unmarried curates in the diocese.

CHAPTER IV.

And still that frantic cry arose,
Though no relief it brought her;
That cry which told Lord Ullin's woes,
"My daughter!—O! my daughter!"

PERILS OF THE PEERAGE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the severe shock which his delicacy, more than his person, had so recently sustained, Sir Otto de Beauvoir was amply compensated by the pleasure he felt on shaking hands with the son of his old friend, poor Lord Petersham, and in perceiving a decided resemblance to one so universally beloved.

The nobleman smiled; and, though evidently flattered at the compliment, was prevented from expressing his feelings by the assiduity of Mr. Shuttleworth, who, indefatigable in his attentions to his honoured guest, seemed fearful of neglecting, even for a moment, the moral obligation which he had imposed upon himself, namely, that of ministering, without stint, to his lordship's vanity.

The dinner, which was sumptuous, and worthy of Soyer and the occasion which called it forth, passed off with a correct, classical, and high-toned composure, upon which the falling of a chandelier could scarcely have produced any sensible effect. The only remark which tended at all to ripple the lucid current of conversation, was blurred from the un-

couth lips of the celebrated Dr. Hedgehog—a clumsy, coarse-featured man, with a pair of grey gloating eyes, and his huge brawny throat altogether devoid of any ligature in the nature of a cravat, as if he suspected that an apoplectic fit was lying in wait for him, and was determined not to be taken off his guard.

The celebrated Dr. Hedgehog was a modern Pythagorean: the sworn foe of cookery, in all its departments, he eschewed both boiled and roast. In him ‘crackling’ woke no transports; he stood alone a solitary savage. His heart leaped not at ‘capers;’ nor could he be softened into humanity by the sight of green turtle, or inspired with generous emotions by ‘a little bit of the brown.’ No one loved the man: how could he expect it? and yet everybody followed him—we mean as patients; for unlike all other great originals, though he had a host of admirers, he had no imitator.

The practice of Dr. Hedgehog was immense, and without wonder; for, as notwithstanding his palatic emigration to the vegetable world, he still maintained the bluff and substantial appearance of a native of the Isle of Beeves, people naturally came to the conclusion that he must be a wonderfully clever man, and his passport to the Esculapian temple of fame was granted accordingly. But inasmuch as few can reach that desirable eminence ‘within five minutes’ walk of the Bank,’ without being more or less annoyed by the crop-eared terriers of envy and detraction, who, snapping at the heels of the aspiring licentiate, endeavour to retard his upward progress, even so it chanced with the celebrated Dr. Hedgehog; for, on his first settling at Darcole, the principal butcher in the town, indig-

nant beyond measure at his pernicious example, unhesitatingly stigmatized him as a cannibal—an assertion to which the notorious fact of a man having been seen at nightfall with a loaded sack at the Doctor's private door lent something like colour and consistency. The consequence of this horrible imputation was, that a mob, consisting of above two hundred pure-minded individuals, forthwith attacked the Doctor's house; and having broken all the windows, and desecrated his door-plate, they manifested still more strongly their abhorrence of his principles, by setting fire to his effigy in the market-place.

"What do you recommend, Doctor, for weak nerves?" said Lady Bloomsbury, addressing the physician, who, with a large bowl of salad before him, and his cuffs turned up, looked and panted like an exhausted grampus.

"A horse," replied the Doctor, plunging his adipose chin into the salad bowl.

"A horse, Doctor?" said Lady Bloomsbury, with astonishment.

"No—not a horse-doctor," returned the physician, after a deep inspiration; "but a horse—ride."

"What an extraordinary man!" whispered Lady Bloomsbury, gazing with awe at the Reverend Mr. Bleat, who assured her ladyship that Hedgehog was a man of wonderful powers—in which opinion Lady Bloomsbury acquiesced; otherwise, as she justly remarked, he would never think of giving such strange advice.

Leaving Dr. Hedgehog to digest his salad and improve his manners as he best might, Lady Bloomsbury directed her attention to matters of pressing personal interest. As she glanced alternately at her

nephew and Captain Hipplesley, she could not avoid drawing discreet comparisons between a lord in being and one in expectancy. Horace Hipplesley, thin, sensitive, and elegant, was in dignity of form and deportment completely cast into shade by the broad-chested and self-possessed Lord Petersham. Both were somewhat reserved; but the silence of Hipplesley seemed that of a man who constantly brooded over some secret calamity; while the sententious style of his lordship bespoke a disposition reflective rather than social, and more accustomed to anatomize the wisdom of others than to submit his own for public dissection. Still, notwithstanding his lordship's advantage in point of figure and presence, even Lady Bloomsbury, with all the prejudices which a fond and anxious parent must necessarily regard an heir so very presumptive as Captain Hipplesley, could not but admit that Horace was by far the most likely person to succeed in a suit, where sentiment has sometimes greater weight than stamina; for in Horace's care-worn visage, and dark, apprehensive eyes, there was an expression of tenderness and sincerity which Lord Petersham, with his sallow complexion, his calculating forehead, and collected manner, repudiated, if he did not despise.

As the genius of different men prompts them to different callings—one having a taste for physic, another a strong desire to take arms—so, in like fashion, Lady Bloomsbury's *forte* directed her to tactics and fortification. By these terms we mean, of course, nothing hostile to humanity; but the tactics adopted by a vigilant *chaperon*, and the system of fortification not unfrequently practised in the drawing-room. Nor was occasion long wanting to display her proficiency in these useful sciences;

for when the gentlemen, after their term of exile had expired, sought a reunion with the ladies, Mr. Shuttleworth was sorely discomfited at finding that Lady Bloomsbury, during his short absence, had contrived so to arrange parties as seriously to obstruct his enjoyment, and prevent the easy rendering of his homage. His intention—reasonably enough—had been to appropriate Lord Petersham exclusively to himself and daughter. In this fond anticipation, however, he was most signally thwarted, and scarcely could credit his vision when he beheld Helen Bloomsbury sitting on his lordship's right hand, and Lady Bloomsbury on his left—by which mode of drawing-room fortification the Martello-Tower of her ladyship's turban served effectually to intercept two formidable cross-batteries; viz., those which the tender glances of Lord Petersham and Mary Shuttleworth (whom Lady Bloomsbury, with unlimited confidence in his powers of sapping and mining, had located near the Reverend Mr. Bleat) might possibly be disposed to bring into reciprocal operation.

Thus, by the manœuvres of an experienced tactician, was Mr. Shuttleworth reduced to the extremity of listening, alone, to Dr. Hedgehog's trenchant denunciations of modern cookery. Silently he stood by the mantel-piece, ever and anon casting furtive looks of jealousy at the members of the opposition, who were all, with one honourable exception, too busily engaged in pleasant conversation to feel any sympathy for his uneasiness. Sir Otto de Beauvoir, finding no vacant ear in which to deposit his budget of small talk, had resigned himself to a gentle reverie on the sofa, from whence he perceived, with amiable satisfaction, the excellent understand-

ing that was apparently established between the charming Laura Bloomsbury and Mr. Inglewood, that fine healthy-looking young man—most innocent of lovers—most rural of solicitors.

To return to the Commander-in-Chief. Lady Bloomsbury having disposed of her forces as already detailed, nothing remained but to open the campaign; so that, while Helen was attacking the unguarded citadel of Lord Petersham's heart on one hand, Lady Bloomsbury, having Captain Hipplesey under her banner, might, from time to time, glean such intelligence as would enable Helen to prosecute or abandon the meditated plan of warfare as expediency might dictate. For this purpose, Lady Bloomsbury was provided with three little coughs—No. 1 hinted at 'moderate;' No. 2 suggested 'cool;' and No. 3 recommended 'very cool.'

Lady Bloomsbury's first inquiry of Captain Hipplesey was respecting the health of his uncle, Lord Kew.

Captain Hipplesey *regretted* to say that "his uncle was still very infirm."

Cough No. 1 warned Helen to be discreet in her civilities to Lord Petersham.

"Was there any truth in the report of his uncle's intended marriage?"

Captain Hipplesey believed not—to him it seemed extremely improbable: he had never heard his uncle even hint at such a thing.

Cough No. 2 strongly inculcated upon Helen the propriety of receiving Lord Petersham's attentions at a low temperature.

"Was the lady young?"

Captain Hipplesey did not know exactly, but he

fancied she must be rather advanced in life, her first husband, Major Sapley, having fallen during the Peninsular war.

Cough No. 3 immediately required Helen to be 'very cool' in her behaviour to Lord Petersham, and not to suffer any one to suppose, for a moment, that she entertained the slightest regard for that doubtful nobleman, beyond what was sanctioned by the terms of their distant relationship.

The evening's entertainments consisted of a little admiration of great men; a little criticism of 'Mœlepotatus;' and a little music, supplied by Laura, who sang and played a canzonet, with brilliant effect, and by Mary, who gave a simple Scottish ballad, so prettily, that the Rev. Mr. Bleat, who turned over the music leaves, assured her, in his most confidential tone, that he was delighted. Sir Otto would fain have prevailed upon Helen to enchant all hearers with '*Di Piacer*;' and Lady Bloomsbury, who always endeavoured to promote the wishes of that 'dear creature,' superadded her maternal influence, but without success. Helen pleaded neither cold nor want of practice, but simply begged to decline. Whether this was done out of consideration for Lord Petersham, whose heart might have fallen a hopeless sacrifice to her vocal and instrumental execution, is a question upon which we are not prepared to offer an opinion. We fondly hope, however, that she was actuated by regard to the mental tranquillity of Captain Hip-lesley, around whom her *roulades* always cast a spell of enchantment, which made him tremble like an aspen tree, while the proud and daring vocalist was soaring into the empyrean of operatic harmony; as if Horace feared that one of her sublime nature

could never again descend to bestow glance, thought, or feeling, upon the wingless things of perishable earth.

When all the company save Lady Bloomsbury had retired, Mr. Shuttleworth, who had been long anxious for the opportunity, inquired what Helen thought of Lord Petersham.

"It is hoped," he said, with an acid smile, "that her endeavours to please will be crowned with success."

"What success do you mean, brother?" demanded Lady Bloomsbury, looking over her silver spectacles, by whose assistance she had been reading a chapter of "*Froissart's Chronicles*."

"Better success than can always be insured in matters of this kind," replied Mr. Shuttleworth; "but practice makes perfect, and one failure only serves as a stimulant to more vigorous efforts;" and here Shuttleworth laughed, as people do in a swing, without feeling either comfortable or secure.

"I don't understand you, brother," said Lady Bloomsbury, regarding him with a doubtful air: "you speak in proverbs, which no doubt are very intelligible to the frequenters of a tavern, but as I just observed, I do not understand them."

"You have two unmarried daughters," said Mr. Shuttleworth, playing with his snuff-box; "and you would of course like to see one or both of them settled."

"Certainly, Mr. Shuttleworth," replied Lady Bloomsbury, in a tone of increased firmness. "Supposing that anything should happen to me, where would the poor girls look for a protector? Can you tell me, Mr. Shuttleworth?"

"The girls have seven or eight thousand pounds, which is enough to buy them a husband a piece."

"My daughters, Mr. Shuttleworth," returned Lady Bloomsbury, with dignity, "do not require *bought* husbands; and only a very coarse mind would think of offering such a suggestion."

Mr. Shuttleworth whistled a bar of 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch.'

"Why, what man of title," he said, "would have the girls but for their money?"

"Hundreds, Mr. Shuttleworth," replied her ladyship, "did they but know——"

"Their extraordinary merits," said Mr. Shuttleworth, sneeringly; "of which you seem determined they shall not long remain in ignorance."

"I know what is expected from one in my situation," rejoined Lady Bloomsbury, "better, Mr. Shuttleworth, than you can inform me; and am not to be deterred from doing my duty to my children by taunts or sneers, come from what quarter they may."

"I am only surprised," returned Mr. Shuttleworth, mildly, "that you, who have always patronized the best society, should descend to the gross vulgarity of hunting an heir, or fishing for a coronet."

"I have yet to learn, Mr. Shuttleworth," replied Lady Bloomsbury, "that there is anything vulgar in nature. It is natural for a parent to consult her children's happiness; but when a father urges his child to bestow her hand on one she does not love, whether the person be peer or peasant, that is vulgarity; because nature and humanity disown it."

Mr. Shuttleworth answered this retort, of which he perfectly understood the signification, only by an irritable pinch of snuff. He was not vanquished

though, at least in his own modest opinion. There are people we know, and nations we have read of, who are so happily constituted — thanks (as a Frenchman would say) to the tenacity of their cuticle—as never to feel their annihilation. To this enviable class of beings belonged an old Prussian general, who, being consoled with on what was regarded as a national calamity, exclaimed, indignantly:—"Beaten? phsaw! No such thing: we were never beaten. It is true, we gave them all our field pieces, but we had previously taken all their shot. Zounds! there was reciprocity: it was merely an exchange of bullets for guns."

Whether Lady Bloomsbury remembered this story, and perceived the inutility of prolonging this verbal contest, or whether, having had the last word, she was satisfied with that great achievement, are questions of secondary importance; certain it is that, without further observation, she left her adversary to his reflections.

"Foolish old woman!" thought Mr. Shuttleworth, as he rang for his bedroom candle; "she thinks to hook Lord Petersham for her daughter, Helen—a likely matter, truly. Thank Heaven! my nephew has too much spirit to put up with other people's leavings."

And deriving satisfaction from this reflection—whose precise import we are not prepared at present to explain—Mr. Shuttleworth complacently retired to his chamber, where, under the tuition of Queen Mab, he was soon busily employed in erecting aerial castles of immense strength and magnitude.

CHAPTER V.

Set it down to my distemper'd fancy—
 Still I tread as 'twere upon my heart-strings.
 My soul's affliction, those essay to heal—
 Alas! in vain—who have the cure of souls.
 Not I alone—the times are out of joint.

IMAGINARY EVILS.

CAPTAIN HIPPLESLEY was sitting alone at breakfast in a private apartment of the Royal Hotel at Newmarket, when 'Boots' of the roving eye brought in his Wellington ditto, and with characteristic humility placed them before their owner.

"What are you grinning at, sir—eh?" sternly demanded the captain, looking up from the newspaper, whose contents he was digesting simultaneously with his French-roll.

"I warn't a-grinnin', sir," replied the polisher of understandings, bristling like an alarmed pig.

"It's false," exclaimed Captain Hipplesley, with a sullen look. "I saw you thrust your tongue into your cheek as you entered the room."

"It was all a-owin' to the mustard, sir?" said Boots, with tears in his eyes; "they will make it so horrid strong."

"You had better be careful," said the captain, jerking his head menacingly. "I'll not be insulted by a——Leave me!—do you hear?"

Boots made a sudden 'bob,' as if some one had aimed a blow at his head; and then, retreating

backwards, he was about to effect his escape, when his politeness sustained a severe shock by a gentleman, who, suddenly opening the door, came into violent collision with his obsequious person, and materially disturbed his equanimity both of body and mind.

Despite of his splenetic feelings, Captain Hipplesley could scarcely avoid smiling at the terrified aspect of the unhappy Boots, when, after being nearly precipitated on his unobtrusive nose, he recovered himself, and regarding his assailant in mute apprehension, slowly sidled out of the apartment; and diving into the scullery, under cover of a large pocket-handkerchief, gave vent to emotions as strong even as the mustard to which he ascribed his inevitable ruin.

"A queer-looking chap that," said Mr. Inglewood; for he was the visitor by whose *entré* Boots had been so sorely discomfited.

"He's a low-minded, ignorant brute," said Hipplesley, drawing on his Wellingtons. "I was strongly tempted to pitch him over the banisters."

"Why, what has he been doing, Horace?"

"I don't know that he has been doing anything particular," replied Hipplesley; "it's his cursed insolent gestures—his grinning eternally—that I detest above all things."

"Grinning?" said Tom—"what should cause him to grin?"

Horace looked at his friend, and his dark eye kindled like a live coal.

"He grinned when he brought my *boots* in," said Horace, laying a marked emphasis on the noun-substantive.

Tom Inglewood, who, considering his professional character, was a dreadfully slow coach, answered the hint thus obliquely conveyed by a countenance expressive of nothing.

"Look here," said Hipplesley, pointing down at his foot—"do you not perceive a—a—slight inequality of surface?"

"No," replied Tom—"honour bright."

"Nothing?—not a little elevation over the region of the great toe—eh?" demanded Hipplesley, with a sharp glance at the solicitor.

Tom Inglewood again protested his incompetency to discover the phenomenon in question.

"It won't do, Tom," returned Hipplesley, heaving a bitter sigh: "you can't avoid seeing it—nobody can; but you won't acknowledge it, because you are afraid of wounding my feelings."

"What is it?" inquired Tom, elevating his eyebrows, and growing warm with suppressed excitement.

Hipplesley desired his friend to close the door.

"Inglewood," said the Captain, folding his arms, and assuming an austere demeanor well calculated to rivet attention, "I am about to reveal to you a secret which for years—I might almost say from infancy—has been a perpetual burthen to my soul."

He paused, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead, heaved another thrilling sigh, and in tones of deep emotion continued his revelations as follows:—

"For three generations, Inglewood, a peculiar fatality has hung over the house of Hipplesley. My father broke his leg by slipping off a curb-stone; my grandfather was crippled by a bullet lodging in his heel at the Battle of Prestonpans; and my great-grandfather (on my mother's side)—a Scottish

laird of some distinction—snapt his tendon Achilles while dancing a strathspey at Holyrood-House—but these were mere accidental calamities, which prudence might have averted. With me, Inglewood, the case is different. No earthly power could have prevented my miserable deformity: I was born so.”

“Born how?” inquired Tom, innocently.

“When a child,” pursued Horace, “not higher than this table, I was sitting one summer’s day on my nurse’s knee. My foot was bare; and a wasp that had flown into the apartment suddenly alighted upon the joint of my great toe. It stung me—but that was nothing: from that day forth the joint began to shew symptoms of morbid development. I could perceive it, though my father could not. I was sent to school. Boys are not very acute observers: they did not notice the malformation; but I lived like a felon in daily fear of detection and exposure. My mother was anxious that I should learn dancing. For a long time, I peremptorily refused, till, seeing that my refusal affected her spirits, I was at length induced to give my consent. And here fortune again favoured me. Even though I wore long-quartered pumps, no one discovered the imperfection under which I suffered; but, Inglewood, could you but know what my feelings were when, with nerves strung to a pitch of the most intense excitement, I stood up before the hired instructor, and, in obedience to his precepts, assumed the first position, you may shudder, but you will not hesitate to believe, that more than once I had serious thoughts of assassinating my dancing-master.”

“You would have gone in for transportation,” said Tom, rubbing his hands with an air of profes-

sional briskness, "unless you could have proved insanity,—that would have been your safest move."

Hippesley frowned at his legal adviser, but did not attempt to controvert his opinion.

"As I grew up to manhood," he proceeded, making himself a supplementary cup of tea, "the sense of my deep affliction weighed more and more heavily upon my mind. I felt that my existence was blighted, for although I might, for a long time, by judicious management and privacy, elude observation, yet, sooner or later, exposure must inevitably take place; and then——The reflection, instead of inciting me to greater caution, made me reckless. I frequented the most public walks, subscribed to three or more of the most fashionable assemblies, and, incredible as it may appear, Inglewood, assumed a gait of the boldest and most independent character, without the slightest notice being taken of this horrible deformity. It was then, Inglewood, that the conviction flashed upon me, that the world was a mass of—what shall I call it—amiable hypocrisy; *they saw my miserable condition, but they would not appear to see it*, from motives of refined humanity. Determined to have these painful misgivings set at rest, I entered the army."

"And has it been discovered there?" inquired the solicitor.

"I fear it has," replied Horace, and his visage grew dark with sorrow; "but of course they are all gentlemanly fellows, and though they can't close their eyes to what is patent to everybody, still they would never think of making it the subject of comment, much less of derision. No! it is only the

canaille—the scum and refuse of society, like the fellow you tumbled over when you came in, whose detestable sneers, while they scarcely admit of open resentment, exasperate me, Tom, sometimes beyond both endurance and expression."

"I think it's fancy in a great measure," said Mr. Inglewood, swallowing a lump of sugar; "my cousin, Sam Roberts, was troubled with a complaint very similar; his doctor told him it was hypochondriacism, or some such stuff, and recommended him to try the Bath waters."

"There's no fancy in it, Tom," replied Horace, solemnly: "didn't you observe yesterday the coolness of Helen Bloomsbury towards me? And is it to be wondered at? with her fine imagination she naturally shuns deformity in any shape; hence her coolness—hence her chilling indifference and disdain."

As Horace uttered these words with misanthropic bitterness, he stamped the offending member upon the hearth-rug, with the energy of one who has just put on a new boot, and wishes to test its powers of expansion.

The arrival of a post letter happily dispelled some portion of the gloom which had settled upon Hipplesley's sensitive mind, and affords a favourable opportunity of presenting our readers with some information respecting his legal friend, which may not be altogether devoid of amusement and instruction.

Mr. Thomas Coke Inglewood, to give him his full titles, was an attorney at law, and solicitor of his (then) majesty's high court of chancery. Notwithstanding, his clients were decidedly more numerous than profitable, his business, even for a

country practitioner, could scarcely be termed extensive. Indeed, after deducting the cost of his certificate, Tom computed his average annual deficit at about five-and-thirty pounds. This imperfect success in his profession, Tom ascribed to two causes; first, his inconvenient honesty, and secondly, his want of what landmen call 'flummery,' and nautical men 'palaver.' To these drawbacks a third might not erroneously be added, somewhat less deserving of commiseration; but as ignorance is sometimes thought to be identical with bliss (and Tom was a happy fellow), we shall not distress our readers by further allusion to it.

It must have been interesting, certainly, to have seen Tom in consultation with his clients. In many instances, the parties changed their relative situations; the legal adviser becoming the legally advised. Like the great Locke, only on a more limited scale, Tom seldom came in contact with any person, however humble and uncultivated, without gleaning from him or her some small scraps of information which, in Tom's state of legal destitution, were exceedingly acceptable. There was a raw-boned, half Scotch, half Irish woman, one of Tom's oldest clients, who, in her knowledge of common law—comprehending under that head slander, assault, battery, and wilful damage, with all which branches she was practically conversant—beat her unsophisticated solicitor dead hollow. Notwithstanding her intellectual superiority, however, she never failed to send for Tom when she got into difficulties, and Tom rarely got her out of them without some pecuniary sacrifice on his part. Tom never sent in his costs, which he always carefully recorded in his diary as 'fee to counsel for repair-

ing Mrs. M'Rowdy's damaged reputation, and clerk, £1 3s. 6d.'

Fortunately for Thomas Coke Inglewood, and much to the satisfaction of those to whom he was endeared by his companionable qualities, and who entertained a very high opinion of his heart, whatever they might think of his head, Tom was not entirely dependent upon his professional exertions. His father, a flourishing and industrious maltster, died, leaving him about seven hundred pounds per annum, and a crazy old red-brick mansion, half covered with ivy, in which Tom lived quietly with his only sister—a young and amiable widow, between whom and Thomas Coke, in point of intelligence, there was no family likeness whatever. Independent, therefore, of the world, Tom Inglewood, with his pointer and his gun—one or both—his most frequent companions, envied not the most learned of his professional brethren. Indeed, he had been heard to declare, one night, over his grog, in confidence to his friend Horace Hipplesley, that he didn't care *that*, snapping his fingers, for his own or any other man's business, and threw out some opaque hints, that if the attorney-generalship were offered him to-morrow, assuming that he must wear a wig in the dog-days, he'd be 'dash'd' if he'd accept it.

Captain Hipplesley having perused—for the third and last time—the letter which had been conveyed to him, as already mentioned, handed it to his solicitor, and requested him to read it and state his opinion thereon.

"Why, it's a lawyer's letter," said Tom, "isn't it?"

"I suppose so," replied Horace; "but you ought to know best."

Tom blushed, and read the difficult epistle carefully from beginning to end.

"Do you understand it?" inquired Hippesley, observing, from his legal adviser's corrugated brow, that his ideas were getting somewhat entangled.

"Not exactly," replied Mr. Inglewood, with a countenance expressive of acute bodily pain. "He talks about your giving him the name of your solicitor. What does he want my name for?"

"Why, if you read on you will see. It is in order that my solicitor may give an undertaking to appear, and spare me the trouble of personal service."

"Oh, right!" cried Tom, briskly: "I see."

"Well, what had I better do?" said Captain Hippesley. "If that old scamp, Brandon, is determined to bring an action against me, I suppose I must defend it."

"Well, it's difficult to say," returned the solicitor, who, though looking more cheerful, was still not quite free from occasional twinges; "very difficult, without referring to the authorities. But what is the chap that brings this charge against you? Is he worth powder and shot? that's the grand point;" and Tom, thrusting his hands into his pockets, smiled with all the cunning of his craft.

"I don't see clearly how that concerns us," said Hippesley; "considering that we are not going to fire upon him, but he upon us."

"That's true again," said Tom, relapsing into his former state of suffering.

"He is a rascally money lender," observed Horace, "and I told him to his face that he was a scoundrel—is that actionable?"

"Well," said Tom, rubbing his leg tenderly, as if he had got the rheumatism, "I am rather inclined to think it is."

"But suppose I can prove it?"

"Oh, that's a different thing," answered Tom, laughing: "'Sugden on Evidence' will tell you that, my boy."

"How so? I always understood the greater the truth, the greater the libel."

Tom paused, shook his head silently, and after reflecting for a moment, announced his intention, as soon as he returned home, of consulting 'Coke upon Libel.'

"'Coke upon Littleton,' don't you mean?" said Horace, with a grim smile.

"Dash it!" cried Tom, slapping his thigh with an air of vexation; "you're right. I never can recollect that chap's name. It's mighty odd, considering how I used to pitch into it. Charlotte and I sat up several nights till half past twelve, for I was determined to have a bushelful of Coke; but there was one chapter which neither she nor I could make head nor tail of: it was the stiffest glass I ever took in my life. Dash me if I'd try it again, Horace, not even if I was ordered to do it by the Lord Chancellor."

"I should give up practice, if I were you," said Hippesley, contemplating, thoughtfully, his solicitor's florid and ingenuous countenance.

"'Pon my life!" replied Tom, "I might almost as well: it costs me nearly forty pounds a year, without reckoning paper and postages. There's one of my clients, named McRowdy—a half-Scotch half-Irish woman—who is everlastingly getting into hot water; and it never costs me less than

one pound three-and-sixpence to get her clear out."

"Your practice is chiefly criminal, I suppose?" said Horace, yawning at these professional reminiscences.

"Why, yes," rejoined Tom, with an air of hesitation; "you may call it so, and yet it partakes a good deal of the nature of common law: it's common people, certainly, who stand most in need of it. For instance, a fellow who robbed a hen-roost sent for me last week to wait upon him at Ilford gaol, and when I had taken instructions for plea (don't you call it?), not content with making the promise to send him a left-off coat, he had the impudence to steal my silver snuff-box, which he hid up the chimney; so that even if he's acquitted for stealing the fowls, I shall have to prosecute my own client for making free with my snuff-box. It's a very unpleasant thing, you know."

This was too much even for the hypochondriac Hippesley; and leaning back in his chair, he indulged in a gentle, but irrepressible, fit of laughter, for which Tom could not apparently discern any sufficient ground or justification. As Tom's temper was laughter-proof, however, he did not manifest any displeasure at the captain's gratuitous merriment; but reminding himself that he had something for Horace in his pocket, he drew forth two letters, sealed with lavender-coloured wax, which he presented for his friend's acceptance.

"That is for Lady Bloomsbury," said Tom, leaning forward, and speaking in a soft confidential tone; "and this for Laura—you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Horace, with a nod of significance; "but these are not in your own writing?"

"No," said Tom ; "they are my sister's. I hate letter-writing—always did from a boy. Charlotte is a dab hand at anything that is soft."

"How so?"

"Having been married," said Tom, seriously, "gives her a great advantage, you know. She understands how these things ought to be done. By-the-bye, do you think we've anything to fear from that chap Petersham?"

"Oh, not a bit," replied Horace ; "he's got his eye fixed on Mary Shuttleworth."

"Didn't you think Helen was rather shy yesterday?" said Inglewood, hesitatingly, as if conscious that he was treading on tender ground.

Horace shrugged his shoulders.

"It's all owing to this," he said, with a sigh, and gently swinging the foot whose real or imagined disfigurement embittered his existence. "Perfection herself, is it surprising that she should exact perfection from others? It would be unnatural were it otherwise."

"She is a thorough-bred high-stepper," said Tom ; "but whether she would go well in harness is another question. I prefer Laura. However, it isn't proper that our tastes should all be alike."

"Laura is a beautiful girl—accomplished, good-natured, and witty," observed Captain Hippesley, who did not altogether admire Mr. Inglewood's taste, as shown in his choice of metaphors ; "but she hasn't got the fine imagination of her sister—nor anything like it. Oh, dear ! no. Perhaps you don't admire genius?"

"A little of it," said Tom, "is all very well ; but I think it's better adapted for a man than a woman. You are quite sure there's no danger of Petersham?"

"Pooh! no. Why should there be? Titles go for nothing there."

"I don't relish his looks, though," replied Tom distrustfully, "dash'd if I do! He looks mighty like a chap I met in the gambling-rooms at Baden last summer; and I wouldn't wager a thousand pounds it wasn't him neither."

"My dear fellow, don't make yourself uneasy," rejoined Hipplesley, slapping Tom on the back. "Keep up your courage. Think less about horses; and devote yourself to the cultivation of the *belles lettres*."

"Letters be bothered!" cried Tom, laughing. "Charlotte's got the whip-hand of both of us in that line—but when will you call on Lady Bloomsbury?"

Horace promised to proceed upon his mission immediately; whereupon Tom urged him, as his dearest friend, to strain every nerve to propitiate her ladyship in his behalf; and not to forget to slip into Laura's hand clandestinely, the accompanying declaration of his ardent and unalterable attachment. Captain Hipplesley again expressed his assurance of success; and Tom, intimating that there was 'no rest but the grave for the pilgrim of love,' took a cool walk on the bridge—from whence his rapid-rising sighs, borne on the favouring breeze, were wafted far out to sea, along with those, probably, of many other Romeos in the same desponding and forlorn condition.

CHAPTER VI.

As by the tongue each grave physician sees
 The insidious workings of obscure disease,
 So by its glib and oily tone we judge
 How slow is man's recovery from fudge.

VISION OF ST. STEPHEN'S.

AFTER remaining two days with his uncle—most of which time was spent in private conference—Lord Petersham left Shuttleworth Hall to prosecute those inquiries which were necessary to establish his claim to the peerage, in the anticipated event of his title being contested ; and his first object was to secure the assistance of Mr. Marmaduke Brandon, upon whose testimony, as his *ci-devant* guardian, his prospects of a favourable issue mainly, if not entirely, depended.

South-Sea Beach, sparkling in the bright rays of an April morning, was the chosen promenade of divers military veterans, who, having distinguished themselves in the service of their country, were rewarded by two or three little medals, which they exhibited on their coats, as if their country's gratitude was so economically inclined, that they felt it ridiculous to put such small change in their pockets. Still, despite of the lassitude commonly engendered by long residence in a tropical climate, Major Palanquin, with his lady, in a pink-muslin morning dress, and poising a Bombay parasol, walked and chatted

briskly, as his quick ear caught the inspiriting strains of martial harmony which burst from the adjacent common, where several battalions of infantry were illustrating the 'epic poetry' of motion.

Among these warlike promenaders—but not of them—was Mr. Marmaduke Brandon. If distinguished by his corpulence, he was no less remarkable for his activity; and though his deportment might be pronounced 'dignified,' it was not of that forbidding nature, which strikes the casual observer with a chill of involuntary awe. The most remarkable feature—if we may so term it—in his appearance, was a pair of bushy, black eyebrows, in which, notwithstanding he must have long since passed his grand climacteric, not a single gray hair was yet apparent. The expression of his placid countenance was at first sight prepossessing, at second perplexing; for the little deep-set jet black eyes had an artfulness in their vigilant glances, which was so mingled with, and subdued by the general suavity of his demeanour, that, like a squeeze of lemon in a bowl of syllabub, it rather improved the *tout ensemble*, and prevented it from cloying by excessive sweetness. He wore black silk stockings and small clothes, with silver buckles; a splendid bunch of gold seals hung before him, and his gold-headed cane was carried at his back, so that both friends and followers might perceive that he was a man who, regardless of his nobler claims to admiration, condescended to adopt the innocent vanities of the world, rather than make himself unamiably conspicuous, by treating them with supercilious disdain.

A decent-looking old sailor, with a large green umbrella, walked by the side of Mr. Marmaduke Brandon,

and to whose narrations the latter was giving his patient and smiling attention, when the approach of a gentleman whom he recognised, prompted him to raise his hat with an ostentatious courtesy, that exposed to public observation, a head redeemed from absolute baldness, by a single tuft of black hair, which gave him a capillary sort of resemblance to a Mussulman.

"How do you do, sir?" he exclaimed. "I hope I see you well. Mr. Staunton, if I am not mistaken?"

A slight inclination from the party appealed to, assured Mr. Brandon that his conjecture was correct.

"I knew your face immediately," he continued, with that urbane cordiality which distinguished him above all things; "though it must be—let me see—more than two years since we had the pleasure of dining together at the *table d' hôte* at Baden."

"I fancy it is," replied Staunton, "about that time. You are looking well."

"I am well," said Mr. Marmaduke Brandon, proudly. "There's not a healthier, nor I believe a happier man in the United Kingdom than myself: my appetite's good, my spirits are good. What more can a monarch reasonably desire? I speak it gratefully. What beautiful weather we have, to be sure—lovely! it is indeed. By the way (excuse me), how is that friend of yours, the gent. who won so much, you know, at a certain table?"

Mr. Staunton confessed his inability to supply the required information.

"I rather think he's got himself into difficulties,"

observed Mr. Brandon, winking his eye significantly; "for when I was last in London, passing down the Old Bailey, I saw him get out of a hackney coach between two queer looking men. To be sure, he might be visiting a friend: it's charitable to suppose so. Delightful weather, certainly. Have you been long in England?"

"Not long," replied Staunton. "I called at your residence, at Gosport, and they told me I should find you on the beach."

"Yes; this is my favourite resort," rejoined Mr. Brandon, describing a large semi-circle with his gold-headed cane, as if to indicate the extent of his jurisdiction. "You see, Mr. Staunton, one likes to associate with real gents. Here I meet Sir Hooka Howdah, K.C.B., and Major Palanquin, of the 35th. I bow to them, and they bow to me; that's pleasant, you know: it shows that one is respected. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt—highly respected."

"There's nothing uncommon about it; because I consider that every man who acts honourably—who can lay his hand upon his heart and fearlessly declare that he can pay twenty shillings in the pound, must necessarily be respected. Don't you think so? Unfortunately, there are many who can't. I speak of tradesmen, and such-like—persons from whom I keep very much aloof. Thank Providence! I have no occasion for labour: I am worth thirty thousand pounds, cash down; Bank Stock and East India Bonds, five thousand more; and I say again, that there isn't a happier man—Jupp," he exclaimed, turning round to the old sailor, "you may go: I shan't want you again to-day."

After some further conversation of a general nature, Mr. Brandon said :—

“ Do you see my yacht there ? the ‘ *Abraham Newland* ’ — 20 tons—schooner-rigged. Curious name, perhaps you’ll think ; but I find it pleasant to read : it always reminds one of an old Bank of England note. She was built for me, and I christened her myself. Would you like to go aboard ? ”

Staunton intimated that he should feel much pleasure, as he wished to speak with Mr. Brandon upon business of some importance ; whereupon the latter gentleman hailed a young man in a Guernsey shirt, by the non-nautical name of Westminster, who was walking on the beach, and on whose approach Mr. Brandon inquired if all was right on board. Having been informed that everything was ready for sailing, Mr. Brandon desired his obedient servant to launch the gig, which was lying on the sands at some distance, and wait there till he was wanted.

“ Charming weather, ’pon my life ! ” said Mr. Brandon, as with his friend he walked down to the water-side ; “ yet I should prefer a little more wind. We are never quite satisfied, you see, Mr. Staunton. Ah ! contentment—that’s the great secret—keep the mind easy—preserve a quiet conscience. No man can be perfectly comfortable without. Don’t you think so ? Yes, we must do good, Mr. Staunton, if we wish to enjoy that—that calm sunshiny sort of feeling. You know what I mean ? you have experienced it, probably, yourself ? ”

“ Cant,” muttered Staunton, biting his lip.

“ You can’t ? ” cried Mr. Brandon, mistaking the word and smiling. “ How so ? We can all do

good, on a large or smaller scale, if we will only make an effort. You may, perhaps, fancy I'm rather a singular person; but, for my own part, there's nothing (next to yachting) that I take more delight in, than affording assistance where it is needed; and then, how pleasing it is to mark the gratitude of such as we have befriended in any way. There's that young man, now—Frederick Westminster; his father's a hackney-coachman; he himself was in the royal navy, as smart a lad as ever handled a marling-spike (as my men often say). However, the foolish fellow got into trouble and came to me. I took him by the hand, as I had done before with others; and now, Mr. Staunton, that faithful young man respects me so much, that he's almost ready to kiss the ground I walk upon. Would you believe it?"

"Poor wretch!" returned Staunton, contemptuously. "Being English ground, of course he loves it for its freedom."

Mr. Brandon shut his eyes and laughed.

"Well," he said, "you young gents of fortune will have your joke. I don't blame you—I ain't offended—it amuses the mind. We can't always be serious, can we? it was never intended; and, 'pon my honour! I don't think there's any harm in a little bit of pleasantry now and then. Here we are. Step in—step in. Let me see my friends safe first. Push off, Freddy, there's a good boy. Magnificent weather, certainly."

In a few minutes they reached the yacht, where an old man, in a blue woollen shirt and canvass trousers, was slowly mopping the deck; another was coiling a stiff rope, apparently very much at his leisure; a third was taxing his energies, in

pulling up a small bucket of water ; while the last old man, with whose grizzled gray beard no razor could possibly have scraped acquaintance for a month or more, followed his commander about like a dog, and never seemed tired of pulling a lock of his own hair, when Mr. Brandon, looking at him sternly, felt himself called upon for a token of his veneration. In fact, all these veterans of naval renown were engaged in doing something, for Mr. Brandon would have no skulkers about him, but their movements betrayed a most unseamanlike want of alacrity, and they all had a dilapidated, ill-paid, and musty aspect, which probably one of Mr. Brandon's 'gents' might not have demurred to, but which any gentleman's yacht would most unequivocally have eschewed.

Having pointed out to his visitor many objects deserving of notice on deck, among which was a brass cannon, which had that morning, Mr. Brandon stated, fired a salute in honour of the Grand Duke of Schoffenspitzhoffel on his passing down the channel, and which was exclusively reserved for such remarkable occasions, the honourable owner of the '*Abraham Newland*' conducted his friend into his state cabin. The sole occupant of this marine apartment, which, though small, looked neat and comfortable, was a pugnacious-visaged mastiff, who, rising with portentous growls at the stranger's entrance, was about to spring at Staunton's throat, when his master interposed, and, having driven his canine guard into a closet, shut the door and made it fast.

"A faithful animal that," said Mr. Brandon, handing his guest a seat ; "he never leaves me when I'm abroad—never ; bless you, if any man

was to attack me, he'd tear him to pieces in five minutes—but perhaps you ain't fond of dogs?"

"Who is likely to attack you?" demanded Staunton, his brow assuming an air of austerity.

"I am merely speaking upon supposition," replied Mr. Brandon; "you don't imagine that I fear assassination. Oh, dear no! I don't believe there's an individual in the whole universe who has fewer enemies than me—and how should it be otherwise? I owe nobody anything; my word is as good as my bond; all my dealings are fair, honourable, and above board—no underhand work—nothing of this sort, you understand:" but, to make his meaning clearer, Mr. Brandon made a cross by placing one forefinger on the other, and winked his eye at his visitor, who turned away with most unequivocal signs of disgust.

Mr. Brandon looked at him with astonishment, and inquired if he was unwell.

"Sir!" exclaimed Staunton, flushing with anger; "do you take me for a child, or an idiot, that I can be imposed upon by your specious garbage. Your vaunted honesty is sheer humbug, nothing else: a dog that carries his honour in his mouth I always fight shy of, for I defy any man to get hold of it without being bitten.—I think we understand one another now, Mr. Brandon?"

"Well!" returned Mr. Brandon, rubbing his hands, while a frank smile illumined his countenance; "you gents of fortune will have your little pleasantries—I ain't offended—it amuses the mind—I always take such things in good part—always; how warm the sun is, to be sure—what will you take?—I've got some first-rate claret, burgundy, and cogniac, and some very choice cigars."

"Free, of course," said Staunton, who had recovered some portion of his natural equanimity, though he still continued thoughtful, his mind evidently teeming with secret matters, too important for hasty or inconsiderate disclosure.

"I won't deny it," returned Mr. Brandon; "my men will now and then bring a bottle or two, and a little tobacco leaf, on board; and I defy any one, however watchful he may be, to prevent them:—then what can I do?—why I seize upon the contraband commodities, and confiscate them—don't you call it?—to my own use."

"You do quite right," said Staunton, "to take what is purchased with your own money."

Mr. Brandon laughed again—discovered for the sixth time the extraordinary charms of the weather, and surprised at the rattling of chain-cable overhead, left his visitor, to ascertain what was going forward on deck.

As soon as Mr. Brandon had quitted the cabin, Staunton looked cautiously round him, and, observing a sort of indentation in one of the bulk-heads, he drew back a panel, and discovered several cutlasses hanging up, one of which was rusted apparently with blood.

Hearing footsteps descending the companion, he hastily closed the panel, and had just resumed his seat, when the honourable owner of the '*Abraham Newland*' appeared with a case-bottle in his hand, and followed by an old man bearing tumblers and cigars on a small japanned tray.

"I don't keep much company," said Mr. Brandon, when he had drawn the cork of the case-bottle; "not that I have any objection to it, so long as it amuses the mind; but when we can look forward

with satisfaction, and backward without regret, as the old toast says, we want nothing but our own reflections to make us happy.—As I often think within myself—what is it that we're constantly striving after in all our outgoings and incomings; that we labour for by day and dream of by night—why, Happiness.”

“Plunder!” ejaculated Staunton, tossing off half a tumbler of brandy, slightly qualified with water; “plunder, sir, is what *we* labour for both day and night.”

Mr. Brandon jerked his head smilingly, as if he had said, “Well, this is a funny fellow, but I suppose I must humour him; young men will be jocular, and why shouldn't they, if it affords a little innocent amusement?”

Notwithstanding Staunton's first copious libation, he replenished his tumbler, and sipped from it at short intervals, till his lips became almost white, and his dark, glowing eye assumed such a mysterious expression, that Mr. Brandon scarcely knew what to make of it, and for a minute or two the *entente cordiale* was insured from all risk of destruction, by each party preserving the profoundest silence.

“You have heard of Lord Petersham?” said Staunton, folding his arms and transfixing his host with a penetrating glance.

“Lord Petersham?” exclaimed Mr. Brandon, “O yes! I know him well. He lives somewhere in Italy.”

“He lives nowhere,” replied Staunton, “he's dead.”

“Is it possible?” cried Mr. Brandon; “dear me! who'd have thought it? Well, it's a debt

we owe, and one which all men of honourable feeling, it is hoped, are willing, with proper notice, to pay : don't you think so ?”

“ Lord Petersham,” observed Staunton, without answering his host's question, “ had a son, who, in his infancy, was entrusted, I believe, to you ?”

“ And I did my duty by him ; there's something here,” said Mr. Brandon, winking his eye, and patting his heart, or rather his waistcoat pocket, “ which wouldn't be so quiet as it is, provided I had cause for reproaching myself in that respect ; you guess what I mean ?—Conscience.”

“ Never mind about conscience just now. Attend to something which you may find much more profitable. Some years since, that child, or boy rather, left his foster-parents' home, and has never since returned.”

Mr. Brandon heaved a long-drawn sigh, and closed his eyes, as if he was deeply affected.

“ Ah !” he ejaculated, with visible emotion, “ if there's one thing which crushes me more than another—I can stand under heavy weights too—it is a boy's ingratitude.”

“ Now, look at me carefully,” said Staunton.

Mr. Brandon started from his temporary fit of abstraction, and did as he was requested.

“ And tell me,” pursued Staunton, “ whether you perceive any resemblance between Lord Petersham's runaway son and myself.”

Mr. Brandon shook his head.

“ No,” he replied ; “ not a shadow of a shade—my boy had red hair, yours is black.”

“ May you not be mistaken ?” returned Staunton, archly ; “ would not five hundred pounds lead you to distrust your judgment ? Supposing I tell you,

sir, that I *am* Lord Petersham; are you prepared to assert and to prove that I am not?"

"Well, I won't answer for that without consulting my attorney," replied Mr. Brandon, pouring out for himself a glass of pure water; "I understand what you mean, but when there's danger—"

"What danger?" demanded Staunton; "the fellow whom you would call Lord Petersham's rightful heir left England yesterday, and in all human probability, will never make his appearance in this country again."

Mr. Brandon gazed at his informant as if he did not clearly comprehend the data on which he founded his peculiar doctrine of probabilities.

"I'll be candid with you," said Staunton; "though candour is not one of my foibles, nor yours neither, I presume. Now listen. The person who supposes himself, and who is generally or universally supposed to be your son; whose name, I believe, is Walter—"

"True!" cried Mr. Brandon with avidity; "Walter is his name."

"Well, sir, that person sailed yesterday for South America, whither he has been sent by Mr. Shuttleworth, for purposes best known to himself."

"But supposing, my dear Mr. Staunton, that the real Lord Petersham should one day or other, by any chance, come forward to claim his title?"

"You need be under no apprehension; he has always passed for your son. You brought him up, I suppose, and represented him to the world as such? he has no suspicions of his birth, and all that I require from you is a simple declaration, that, to the best of your belief, I am—what I am—Lord Petersham."

Mr. Brandon knit his brows thoughtfully, contracted his lips, sighed, shook his head, passed his hand carefully over his chin, and exhibited divers other symptoms of a consumptive conscience, and a wavering resolution.

"Time makes great alterations," he said, addressing his silver shoe-buckle; "wonderful. I have heard of people's hair changing from black to white in a single night: we can't account for these things further than we are assured it's all owing to the mind. A gent, for instance, has reddish hair; he don't like it; he broods over it continually; his humours become stagnated, as it were, and, like ink, which is pale when you first use it, in four-and-twenty hours it becomes as black as my shoe."

Staunton testified his approbation of this ingenious hypothesis, simply by remarking that there was no doubt of it, and then proceeded to inform Mr. Brandon, that he was about to form an alliance with Mr. Shuttleworth's only daughter; but to remove all misgivings from that last-mentioned gentleman's mind respecting his claim to the peerage, he wished Mr. Brandon to write a letter vouching for the fact, which he would himself indite, and which would be sufficient for all present exigences. What further legal evidence might be required should he have to fight his battle in the House of Lords, must be reserved for consideration hereafter. At all events, he undertook to pay over to Mr. Brandon five hundred pounds, immediately upon his union with Miss Shuttleworth, whose fortune, he candidly confessed, was her most irresistible attraction, before which all others paled their ineffectual fires.

Mr. Brandon modestly inquired what security

his friend proposed giving, for the faithful performance of this contract.

"My honour!" replied Staunton, with manly emphasis, and regarding his host with an air of defiance.

"Won't do," returned Mr. Brandon, shaking his head knowingly; "honour's like a pair of white kid gloves—all very well on certain occasions, but not to wear in common; because you see, my dear Mr. Staunton, it don't look business-like."

Assuming that this difficulty could be removed, however, Mr. Brandon seemed rather inclined to promote his friend's matrimonial scheme, provided that it could be done 'with safety,' a principle which had, through life, governed all his undertakings, and to which he mainly ascribed his wonderful success and present prosperity. When any proposition was submitted to him, whether black, white, or of any intermediate complexion, the first question Mr. Brandon put to his alarmed conscience was, 'Can it be done with safety?' If it could, he was always willing to serve a friend in any speculation, however bold or hazardous it might be. On the present occasion, without for a moment challenging his friend's veracity, for he was sure that Mr. Staunton, like himself, was far too honourable to be guilty of wilful misrepresentation, he felt that he should be violating his ruling principle if, before he determined upon writing the proposed letter, he was not allowed a personal interview with Mr. Shuttleworth, so that he might learn from that gentleman's own lips, what had become of his son Walter—he meant the real Lord Petersham—and what probability there was of his ultimate return.

Staunton thought this precaution almost unneces-

sary ; but as he was acting in perfect good faith, of course he could entertain no objection to it, and it was consequently arranged, that Mr. Brandon should accompany Staunton to Shuttleworth Hall on the following day, Mr. Brandon wishing, in the mean time, to run as far as Weymouth on important business, which he did not think proper to explain. Having shaken hands with the honourable owner of the '*Abraham Newland*,' Staunton stepped into the boat which had conveyed him hither, Mr. Brandon standing at the gangway, and bowing with his head uncovered, as his friend was rowed ashore.

"You are in Mr. Brandon's regular employ, I suppose," said Staunton, addressing the young sailor, whose dark and intelligent features bore traits of dejection, not often seen in persons of his class.

The young sailor answered with a laconic affirmative.

"I understand you've been in the navy ; why are you not there now ? You would stand a better chance of promotion on board of a man-of-war than in a pleasure yacht."

The young sailor's expressive countenance assumed a bitter smile, as, shaking his raven ringlets, he said with a sigh—"There's little pleasure in it for me, sir."

"You combine, perhaps, pleasure with business," said Staunton significantly, "it's a bad trade, Westminster—I believe that's your name ? You may fall into awkward hands one of these days."

"It's not of much consequence what becomes of me, sir," returned the sailor, "if I am shot upon these sands some day or other, no one will have cause to grieve about it. I'm already dead to those

who might have done so. Would to Heaven I were not!"

It was with evident emotion that these words were uttered, and the speaker turned away his head apparently to conceal it from the stranger, as the boat's wheel grated on the shingly beach; and having discharged his passenger, he stood up, and pushed off again into deep water.


The sailor was not long in returning to the yacht, when her anchor was weighed, her top-sail run up, and with her larboard bow almost breasting the waves, she described a circle, like the sea-birds which hovered round her, as if to display the navigating powers of those by whom she was commanded; then, as the sunbeams, glancing from between a snowy pile of clouds, flashed on the blue and white pennon which fluttered from her mast-head, away she went before a fresh blowing breeze, leaping and bowing gallantly over the sparkling sea, her honourable owner standing on deck, and looking towards the shore through a telescope, while Staunton, remaining on the beach, contemplated her with thoughtful eye, till she became a mere speck in the horizon, and was at length completely shut out from view, by the verdant headlands of the Isle of Wight.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh ! save me from my friends, their praise hath dealt the hardest blows ;
My wife,—my gentle wife,—will cast accounts up with my foes.


THE DYING GLADIATOR.

THE introduction of Mr. Brandon to the master of Shuttleworth Hall, was attended with results so pleasing and satisfactory, as if not attested by more than one respectable witness, would scarcely be credited in any court of competent jurisdiction. In fact, it was a meeting, not of the 'waters,' but of milk and honey. Mr. Brandon, that complacent and urbane personage, was charmed by the air of condescension which distinguished one, whom he privately assured Lord Petersham (otherwise Staunton), was a 'thorough gent in every sense of the word.' Mr. Shuttleworth, on his side, was rather astonished to find that the disgust, which had been engendered in his mind, by the knowledge of Brandon's cruelty to his reputed son Walter, and which Mr. Shuttleworth had nourished for so many years, should almost instantaneously disappear, when he was brought face to face with a person, who promised to render his noble nephew most essential service, by assisting him into his proper place in the book of the peerage. Shall we denounce our respected friend Nicholas, for thus trimming his sails according as the wind blew? Assuredly not. *There are some simple-minded people, it is true,*



who pretend to be struck with rustic amazement, when they behold a senatorial conjuror eating his own words, as if there was something monstrously indigestible about such verbal luxuries. These sciolists—for we can designate them by no softer name—will doubtless regard with contemptuous derision the ‘uncle of a peer’ quietly shelving his abhorrence of parental tyranny, from motives so closely identified with self-aggrandisement. But men of more expanded sympathies will touch lightly upon his infirmity, remembering that the spider, though universally shunned and despised for his rapacious disposition, is considered a highly respectable individual, when, having cut their fingers, people stand in need of his web for a styptic.

From the tenor of Mr. Brandon’s observations, it appeared that he should feel most happy to oblige Mr. Shuttleworth and his nephew in any way whatever—provided, of course, that it could be done with safety. What Mr. Brandon meant by safety was simply this: Mr. Shuttleworth must bear in mind, that the child, boy, or rather young gent, committed to his wife’s care by Lady Petersham shortly before her ladyship’s melancholy decease, did many years ago, without any just cause or provocation him thereunto moving, ungratefully abscond from his foster-parents’ roof and protection, and had never been seen or heard of till the previous day, when the present gent (turning to Staunton) accosted him on South-Sea Beach, and represented himself to be that prodigal son of Lord Petersham, whom he had by public advertisement entreated to return to his disconsolate protectors, and all would be overlooked and forgotten. Under these circumstances, *Mr. Shuttleworth must admit, that he (Mr. Bran-*




don)—whose word was as good as his bond, if not better, considering that such frail instruments might be destroyed by fire, or rats, or rendered inoperative, as too often happened, by their own inherent ambiguity—was bound to act with extreme circumspection, and to take advice of counsel before he made his solemn asseveration that the gent on his right hand was, beyond all possibility of question, the beloved runaway son of the late deeply-lamented Lord Viscount Petersham. He therefore craved permission of Mr. Shuttleworth—and trusted that he would not be offended thereby—to consult with his legal adviser—a man of wonderful learning, who occupied chambers in Fig-tree-court, Temple (third floor, left hand, name of Pluckey), of whose legal acquirements the judges had become so jealous, that they had conspired together to rob him of his wig and gown ; and he had been robbed accordingly.

Of course, Mr. Shuttleworth could have no objection to so reasonable a proposition. All that he and Lord Petersham wanted was despatch—delays being always annoying, if not dangerous. Mr. Brandon admitted the force of this axiom, and promised not to lose an hour, but to proceed at once to town, and enter into consultation with Counsellor Pluckey. His parental tenderness, however, would not permit him to take leave of Mr. Shuttleworth without inquiring after the health of his son Walter, and when he was expected to return. Mr. Shuttleworth answered these inquiries somewhat evasively—that it was uncertain—it might be six months, or as many years—or he might not return at all ; with which information Mr. Brandon, with his wonted urbanity, expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

In pursuance of this arrangement, Mr. Brandon

posted up to town; but it being late when he arrived at the 'Belle Sauvage,' instead of going direct to Fig-tree-court, he directed his steps to a little, old-fashioned tavern, with a tarnished bunch of imitation grapes over its lowly portal, and divers netted bags of lemons in its small bow-window, which lay hid in a *cul de sac*, forming one of the numerous ramifications of Paternoster-row. Threading sundry tortuous passages, Mr. Brandon entered a snug, wainscotted apartment, of which the most conspicuous ornament was a greenish bust, with the inscription, 'O rare Ben Jonson!' at its foot, where he found Counsellor Pluckey, sacrificing to Bacchus instead of Themis, and unbending his powerful intellect by a large consumption of pale ale. Pluckey, though in soul a martyr, was in appearance a little man with a bold, combustible countenance. He affected pepper-and-salt trousers and black gaiters; and he sat in an arm-chair with his commanding visual orbs fixed on the ceiling, as if he sought with eagle gaze to penetrate the inscrutable secrets of futurity.

There were two other gentlemen with Mr. Pluckey. One, who was writing at a round table, was a bulky, and rather important-looking personage of sixty, or upwards, with a 'brutus,' and his throat encircled by a voluminous roll of amber-coloured cloth. A margin of waistcoat—white by courtesy—revealed itself above the collar of his rusty black coat, which was secured at the shoulder only by a strong pin—any alliance between its lower extremities being forbidden by its wearer's excessive corpulency. The keen-eyed gentleman, with red whiskers and a foraging cap, who sat facing him, his legs crossed, and tapping his patched boot with a ratan, wore a military frock-coat, braided all over the swelling



breast, from beneath which peeped a suggestion of blue-cotton pocket-handkerchief. Whatever might have been the extent of this gentleman's warlike achievements, his uniform had evidently seen a deal of service, and felt it too.

"Who are those gents there?" said Mr. Brandon, winking his eye at Counsellor Pluckey, when, after the usual preliminary inquiries, their conversation became personal and particular.

"That majestic-looking old man, sir," replied Mr. Pluckey, with profound sincerity in his aspect, "is the great Bishop Barking, the most distinguished polemical writer perhaps that this country ever produced. As a philologist and dialectician, old Parr couldn't hold a candle to him. I have only one fault to find with Barking: he is insufferably conceited, and disgustingly pedantic. Though his life is irreproachable, he is a thorough bigot; and by losing his temper when he meets with the slightest contradiction, he renders himself ridiculous and contemptible. In short," added Pluckey, with indignant emphasis, "he is a proud, conceited, bigoted old ass."

"You seem to blow hot and cold with the same breath," observed Mr. Brandon, smiling at his counsellor's unnecessary vehemence.

"I don't like to express disapprobation of any man's character," returned Mr. Pluckey, sipping his pale ale; "he who would slander his friend I'd have branded with everlasting infamy—but still, *Magna est veritas et prævalebit*: the most despicable cowardice is that which prevents a man from speaking his mind. There's Captain Duckwood yonder, a perfect gentleman in his manners, of admirable address, courteous, conversational, and so

forth—a more agreeable companion could not be desired; but a greater scamp—one more totally destitute of all pretensions to common honesty—you wouldn't find in Newgate. I've known him, sir, to walk all round the Regent's Park to avoid meeting a creditor in the New Road to whom he owed three and sixpence—isn't it horrible?"

Mr. Brandon agreed with his counsellor—it *was* horrible—and inquired how Captain Duckwood came to be reduced to his present apparent state of destitution—a phenomenon for which Mr. Pluckey accounted by stating, that the captain had served with distinction in the Peninsula; but had some time since been sent to Coventry for neglecting to challenge an Irish major, who denounced him, in the heat of debate, as the 'red-whiskered son of a toothless fishmonger.'

"Do you want to see a first-class man?" said Mr. Pluckey, as a pale face with an imperial attached presented itself at the little window, which admitted a dim uncertain light into the parlour from the passage, to which it adjoined.

"Is he worth money?" inquired Mr. Brandon, with an acute glance at his counsellor.

"No, sir; but he is worth something much more valuable," replied Mr. Pluckey; "that gentleman whom you saw just now is the author of '*Mælepotatus*,' a classical tragedy, upon the model of Euripides; it was *plutoed* (and very properly) at Drury three seasons ago—you never read it?"

Mr. Brandon candidly confessed that he never had.

"Noble sentiments, sir; splendid diction—there is only one blemish in that fine tragedy—it is turgid, fearfully turgid—treacle and soap-suds in fact.

I agree with Barking,—‘ Mælepotatus’ certainly is like the soil of Ireland, with which its title is associated, a mass of irreclaimable bog.”

At this moment the door opened, and a stout man, in a broad-brimmed hat, with an immense beard like a learned rabbin, nodded to Mr. Pluckey—hoped he was well—expected to see him again, and withdrew.

“ A wonderful man that, sir,” observed Mr. Pluckey, shaking his head with impressive gravity ; “ don’t you know him ? ”

“ It isn’t Rothschild, is it ? ” said Mr. Brandon ; “ he’s the most wonderful man I know.”

“ Surely you have heard of Bamwell, the projector of the proposed suspension bridge between Dover and Calais—a magnificent project certainly, and one that must command universal admiration, if it were practicable. Bamwell, sir, is the Alexander of civil engineers. At his nod mountains seem to crumble into dust, rivers shrink into puddles, and granite rocks become soft and plastic as common pipe-clay. He has offered, if the government will furnish the required capital (fifteen millions), to superintend the construction gratuitously. The Board of Trade sneered at the scheme, and no wonder, for Bamwell knew as well as you or I that, supposing his bridge were carried out, not even a fishing smack would ever be persuaded to pass under it. I am always reluctant to hurt any man’s feelings, sir, but I should’nt hesitate to tell Bamwell to his face, if I thought it necessary, that he was neither more nor less than a disappointed swindler.”

Mr. Brandon thought this language a little too severe, and, with his characteristic benevolence, was

about to make some observation by way of mitigating the rigour of his counsellor's judgment upon the Dover and Calais suspension bridge and its projector, when a fat merry-looking little man, in a smart drab over-coat with a small cape, and his crimson velvet waistcoat festooned with gold chains, presented his laughing countenance at the half-opened door, and exclaiming, "How do, Pluckey?—coming up?—see you again—tat-ta," disappeared before he had quite finished his idiomatic oration.

"A very nice-looking, well-dressed gent that," said Mr. Brandon, filling his glass from Pluckey's tankard; "commercial I take it?—belongs to some great house in the city?—I like his appearance much."

"So do most people," replied Mr. Pluckey, who had been latterly engaged in curiously twisting his mouth awry, a habit to which he was addicted when thinking deeply, and which, though decidedly unsuited to a court of law, would have been a great hit in the comic business of a pantomime.

"He keeps a couple of hunters, does that fellow," continued Mr. Pluckey; "gives champagne suppers, and spends five thousand a year in advertisements."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mr. Brandon, with an air of stupendous admiration; "some large manufacturer doubtless—one of those honourable liberal-minded individuals of whom our country has so much reason to be proud."

"If our country is proud of her quacks," returned Pluckey, with diabolical sarcasm; "and I don't see why she shouldn't be, considering their number, and how magnificently she supports them:

—that is the notorious *charlatan*, Puffadder, the inventor of *airopathy*."

"*Airopathy*!" cried Mr. Brandon; "you surprise me—but what am I to understand by *airopathy*?"

"I hardly know," said Pluckey; "but I believe it's some new quack medical system, by which a blast of cold air, being directed to the part of the body affected, will cure any disease in twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four hours:—that villain, sir, in one year, slaughters as many victims as the colleges of physicians and surgeons put together. He never touches my shoulder but I feel a thrill of horror all over me. People talk of his generosity—he can well afford to entertain his friends (contemptible sycophants every one of them) when he is making a princely fortune by the employment of his murderous bellows."

So saying, Mr. Pluckey, as if to show his detestation of everything spurious, threw down the suspicious cigar, from which he had previously drawn two or three difficult puffs of smoke, and trod it into nothingness. His resentment, however, soon passed away, and several other celebrated characters giving him a nod of recognition, as they peeped in at the little passage window, or popped in at the door, Mr. Pluckey descanted on their various merits, with the same candour and impartiality which he had evinced when dealing with their predecessors.

As soon as Mr. Brandon and Pluckey were free from interruption, the former gentleman communicated to his learned Counsel the case, upon which he required his most judicious opinion.

What Mr. Brandon desired was to secure, at all

events, and as soon as possible, the five hundred pounds promised by Staunton, on his marriage with Miss Shuttleworth. This done, he should have no difficulty in check-mating the donor, by producing sooner or later a party, whose claim to the title of Petersham should be so strongly attested by Mr. Brandon and others, as to leave Staunton not a leg of legal evidence to stand upon. He suggested, therefore, that Pluckey should frame a very cautious letter, addressed to Mr. Shuttleworth, the tone of which should be sufficiently firm, to remove any scruples which that gentleman might entertain as to Staunton's identity, without so far compromising Mr. Brandon as to render him *hors de combat*, when the great battle for the peerage should be fought, as fought it must be, and in which Mr. Brandon was ambitious of acting as the champion of the rightful heir, whom, having known and succoured from infancy, he regarded with feelings almost of parental interest.

Mr. Pluckey saw clearly what his patron was aiming at, and hesitated not to pronounce his object 'good,' though he could not say so much for the means by which it was proposed to be effected. He disapproved entirely of placing at Mr. Shuttleworth's command, any documentary evidence whatever. The 'words that burn,' as Pluckey justly observed, are those which people inscribe with their fingers, which too frequently suffer by their owners indiscretion. He moved, by way of amendment, that Mr. Brandon and himself, *in propria persona*, should go down to Shuttleworth Hall and arrange the business, without blotting even half a sheet of Bath post over it. Let him only have the privilege of a personal communication, and he would under-

take to convince Mr. Shuttleworth, or anybody else, that his client sincerely believed Staunton to be the true Lord Petersham; and, at the same time, to reserve to his client full power and authority to repudiate all connexion with the Staunton dynasty, and to affirm positively that Mr. Staunton was *not* the true Lord Petersham, whenever and wherever it might be expedient to make that solemn and conscientious statutory declaration.

Mr. Brandon, who was evidently affected by this manifestation of Pluckey's zealous and disinterested friendship, shook his hand warmly, and consented to accompany him down to Shuttleworth Hall, as soon as he had called upon one or two gentlemen holding high official positions in the custom-house, whom he greatly respected, and in whose integrity he had long reposed an unbounded confidence, which had never yet been abused or betrayed.

This important business being thus pleasantly disposed of, and a great weight thereby removed from Mr. Brandon's mind, he was about, with the impetuosity of his generous nature, to ring the bell and order Welch rare-bits for two, when a stately young lady, with dark classically-braided hair, who looked like the 'Norma' of private life, slightly opened the parlour door, and informed Mr. Pluckey, in a tone of mysterious softness, that he was wanted. The counsellor, flushed with anticipation, immediately rose, and, begging his client to excuse him for a short time, he retired, leaving Mr. Brandon to enjoy himself by listening to the great Bishop Barking and Captain Duckweed, whose conversation, as might be supposed from their celebrity, *was capable of supplying an intellectual banquet,*

upon which common mortals are not permitted, probably, to regale more than once in a life-time. Such as it is—original, certainly, if not remarkably instructive—it will be found accurately reported in the following chapter.



CHAPTER VIII.

Such antics are by learning bred
In youth, with little trouble;
See! logic standing on its head,
And common sense bent double.

COLLEGE OF CLOWNS.

“BISHOP!” said Captain Duckweed, taking a pack of clouded cards from the mantel-shelf; “as all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, I’ll give you a game of Put.”

“Put,” observed the great Bishop Barking, folding up his finished manuscript, and committing it carefully to his breast-pocket; “Put is a pure Saxon root, signifying to fill up; hence the game of Put which fills up our leisure, by affording us the means of innocent relaxation. From ‘Put,’ we also derive our fine old Saxon ‘Putty,’ the composition wherewith painters and glaziers ‘fill up’ the chinks and crevices in dilapidated wainscottings. It hath also its co-relatives ‘Patty,’ a country-wench, and ‘Petty,’ applied to cash commonly disbursed by the junior clerk of a mercantile establishment.”

While the great Bishop Barking was thus

learnedly discoursing, Captain Duckweed counted the cards, and perceiving a larger speck of dirt than usual on one of them, he selected the firmest item in his fragile blue cotton pocket-handkerchief, and adroitly effected its removal.

"Dugdale, in his 'Monasticon Anglicanum,'" pursued the great Bishop Barking, interlacing his fingers over his goodly corporation with prelatical complacency; "Dugdale, speaking of the etymological properties of 'Put,' saith as follows:—'Y^e Abbot of St. Guttlebury was sorely grievéd when, on looking into y^e buttery, he found only one huge rye-loaf (at which he lookéd awry) and y^e drumstick of a capon—naithless his appetite being sharpish set, he was fain to 'put up' with y^e aforesaid bread and pull it.'"

"Cut, Bishop," cried the captain, inwardly wishing Dugdale and his 'Monasticon Anglicanum' at the ancient city of Jericho.

"It is singular," observed the great Bishop Barking, taking snuff from his waistcoat-pocket; "it is singular, sir, how phrases become perverted from their original and legitimate signification, by the carelessness of some, and the Bœotian stupidity of others. For example, 'cut and come again:—' the learned Spelman, in his 'Omnibus Rebus,' tells us it is a corruption of 'cat and combe again;' and traces its origin to a colonel named Combe, in the parliamentary forces; who, being much addicted to the use of that instrument of torture ycleped the 'cat,' whenever a soldier underwent flagellation, the general exclamation among his comrades was, 'Cat and Combe again! Cat and Combe again!'"

"Quite proper, Bishop," said Captain Duckweed, *shuffling the cards with the dexterity of an old*

practitioner. "I speak as a military man—purely as a military man."

"From the hospital," continued the great Barking, who made it his rule never to answer impertinent interruptions,—“from the hospital, sir, this popular phrase of ‘Cat and Combe again,’ was taken by the hospitable (of course in a mangled form), and is now too often employed as a colloquial incentive to downright gluttony. What, pray, is to be the aim of our contention?”

"Whatever you please," replied Captain Duckweed, sitting very erect, and assuming, as much as possible, the air of a man of independent property.

"Then let it be a magnum of Glenlivat," rejoined the Bishop. "I would not play for a lesser consideration, because the great German metaphysician, Humm, in the 29th canon of his ‘Dialectus,’ lays it down as a demonstrable proposition, that ‘*Tempus fugit* ;’ and we must therefore not waste our precious time in contending for trifles. Nor would I play for a greater consideration, seeing that to do so would savour overmuch of the pernicious practice of gambling (or, as it was formerly termed, ‘scrambling’) for heavy stakes, and which is supposed to have had its origin among the Cymri, with whom it was customary, when fuel was required, to start boys into the fields and set them ‘scrambling’ for some of the heaviest ‘stakes’ in the country. Our modern steeple-chase I take to be a modification of this practice; but, while equally barbarous, it is much inferior in one respect—it has not the same utility to recommend it. *Ergo*, I will play you for one magnum of Glenlivat, which is my *ultimatum* and my *quantum suff.*"

The preliminaries of war being thus satisfactorily

adjusted, hostilities forthwith commenced, and after a protracted struggle, during which the issue was long doubtful, capricious fortune smiled on Bishop Barking, who with calm dignity pronounced himself the victor, intimating also, to prevent trouble, that he should not play again, as he approved of temperance in all things.

"Confound that king of yours, I say," cried Captain Duckweed, alluding to the representative of royalty which had occasioned his defeat.

"Eh! what?" ejaculated the bishop, with indignant amazement, "con——good heavens! can I believe my ears?"

Captain Duckweed confessed that he could see no difficulty, as in his opinion they were long enough for anything.

"Do you suppose," demanded the great Bishop Barking, disregarding this personal affront, in his eagerness to vindicate his outraged loyalty,—“do you suppose that I'll sit tamely by and hear my sovereign confounded? *I* that have been the staunch, unflinching champion of the monarchy for more than a quarter of a century, through good report and through evil report.”

"*You* the champion of the monarchy!" retorted Duckweed, folding his arms with haughty contempt. "*You*, truly; who, while we, sir, have deluged all Europe with blood, have shed, perhaps, in her defence, half a gallon of ink. Ha! ha!" and the captain laughed with exasperating audacity.

"Sir! sir!" cried Bishop Barking, squaring his elbows, and jerking himself up, like a man on a hard-trotting horse; "would you dare to place your artillery in opposition to my articles, or put a column of cut-throats before a column of my 'Ety-

mologia,' or my 'Dissertation on Bah?' Is not the march of intellect more noble than the march of infantry?"

"No!" answered Duckweed.

"No!" exclaimed the bishop; "are you aware, sir, what has raised my country to her present pinnacle of greatness?"

"Water," replied the captain, "and fire, sir. Does not the whole world acknowledge, by sea and land, the strength of our arms?"

"And does not the whole world, sir, acknowledge the ten hundred thousand millionth times greater strength of our heads?" demanded the bishop boldly, running his fingers through his stupendous brutus.

"Are those, pray, what you mean by the *wooden* walls of old England?" inquired Captain Duckweed, grinning over the bristles of his dilapidated stock.

"Malignant viper!" returned Bishop Barking, swelling with vengeful pride, "will nothing satisfy you but you must drag your calumnious slime over all that is sacred, conservative, and sublime? Would you dare revile the cloth?"

"Thou incarnation of moral and political corruption!" said Duckweed, pointing his ratan contemptuously at his enraged opponent, "after all our brilliant conquests, have you the base ingratitude to vilify the army?"

"Yah!" cried the great Bishop Barking, and he hissed, in the intensity of his scorn, through his set teeth, which so irritated his martial opponent, that, believing he had legal authority for so doing, he threatened to pull the bishop's venerable nose; an indignity which the latter instantly resented, by

snatching up the fire-shovel, and flattening therewith the hero's well-padded military cap; but recoiling with the shock of his own prowess, the bishop's portly figure staggered backwards, and fell with stunning violence to the ground, upsetting, in his decline, a round table and sundry vessels, with whose fluent contents he was instantly saturated almost from head to foot.

Counsellor Pluckey, and a weazel-faced man in a white apron, rushed in at this critical moment, and, assisted by Mr. Brandon and two or three other gentlemen, whom they summoned for the purpose, their combined and strenuous exertions ultimately succeeded in raising the great Bishop Barking from his fallen estate, and placing him in an easy chair, where he remained for some minutes silently breathing himself, with a livid countenance, and evidently meditating mischief.

Taking advantage of the confusion arising out of this frightful calamity, Captain Duckweed quietly disappeared, leaving his debt for a magnum of Glenlivat, to be liquidated at some future opportunity.

"A plague on all copper captains, say I;" growled the great Bishop Barking, quoting from one of the old dramatists; "but I'll have the law of him—marry will I—if it cost me a golconda, I'll *grill* him;" and with a look of savage satisfaction, the bishop rose from his seat, and, supported by his bamboo cane, moved slowly towards the door, followed by his adherents in mute and mournful reverence.

The arrangement entered into with Mr. Pluckey was one which, upon mature reflection, Mr. Brandon regarded with much less favour than it

received, when first submitted for his candid consideration. Neither counsellors nor heavy luggage of any description, could be conveyed from place to place, without some pecuniary sacrifice, and when Mr. Brandon came to calculate what his legal adviser's travelling expenses would amount to, exclusive of compensation for loss of time—if that could be deemed an item of any consequence, upon which Mr. Pluckey, whose time was almost entirely consumed in tavern oratory, placed so little ostensible value—when Mr. Brandon had completed these estimates, he became nervous and uneasy, and thought seriously of falling back upon his original intention, by availing himself of Mr. Pluckey's epistolary accomplishments, postponing the acceptance of his polite offer of travelling companion, to another and more indefinite opportunity.

On the other hand, Mr. Brandon could not deny that this line of policy was not altogether free from objection. Though the tempting bait of five hundred pounds, held out by Staunton, dazzled his weak vision, and made him eager to strain every nerve, and silence every scruple to secure it; yet having ulterior objects in view, of which neither Staunton nor Mr. Pluckey had any suspicion, he was anxious to reserve to himself the privilege of putting his attesting stamp upon the genuine coin, when the counterfeit had answered its temporary purpose. Could this be safely accomplished by letter? He questioned it. Black and white were 'fast colours.' He therefore determined upon acceding to his counsellor's suggestion, and having obtained the reward payable on the celebration of the *pseudo* Lord Peter-sham's marriage with Miss Shuttleworth, to set about the prosecution of those secret schemes,

whose successful result would clearly demonstrate the paradoxical apophthegm, that truth is sometimes more profitable even than trickery.

On the morning appointed for Mr. Marmaduke Brandon's departure from town, he was proceeding through Charterhouse-square, when his attention was arrested by a crowd assembled to witness an *al fresco* performance of gymnastics, which, being free of all charge, save what spontaneous generosity imposed, seemed to excite considerable public interest. Nor was this feeling solely confined to the natives of Britain's favoured isle. An Italian image man, and the flat-capped members of a German horn band, were so much struck by the exhibition, as to neglect their own peculiar business for its enjoyment ; while a bilious-looking doctor's boy, who, knowing, of course, something of anatomy, naturally came to scoff, remained with his hand in his pocket, intending, no doubt, to pay. In the centre of a circle, formed by the spectators, was one of those flexible professors of the physical arts, whom our rude forefathers were accustomed to call 'tumblers.' From what university these 'professors' derive their modern collegiate designation, we are puzzled to conceive ; unless, as the great Bishop Barking positively affirms, they are indebted for it to the 'faculties of Dublin.' The professor was a long-headed, hungry-looking, raw-boned youth, clad in a soldier's coat, and black small clothes, but devoid of those troublesome encumbrances — hat, stockings, and shoes — while his scanty crop of red hair being cut round the temples *à la* Sheppard, was calculated to make a favourable impression on the numerous admirers of that distinguished hero of romance, whom some great

writer has not unaptly termed the 'Cid of Saffron-hill.'

Standing, or rather walking upon his hands, and clapping together the soles of his bare feet, so as to furnish an accompaniment to his voice, the professor sang in tones of painful huskiness an ancient ballad; it might, from its subject, have been an ante-diluvian one, which we have not been able to find either in Percy's 'Reliques,' or the more erudite collections of Ritson and Pinkerton. We subjoin one verse, just as a specimen of the commodity, to deal in which our modern troubadour, we presume, had taken out a common poetical licence. It ran as follows:—

"Adam was a lazy man
And always read the news,
And when he died, a elephant
Stepp'd into both his shoes,
Ri tol looral," &c. &c.

The professor concluded this branch of his performance with great *éclat*, by throwing a summerset which elicited unanimous and deserved applause.

Having created a strong sensation by the taste of his quality, with which he had thus spontaneously supplied his patrons, the professor made an abrupt but forcible appeal to the generosity of a liberal and discerning public, urgently inviting some lady or gentleman to cast a small donation into the ring, and undertaking that "if they was a mind to make it up to tup-pence, he would give 'em a reg'lar screecher."

The required premium, as might be anticipated from such an alluring representation, was not long forthcoming, and the professor was about to redeem his promise of a 'screecher,' when his eye, in a fine phrensy rolling, accidentally caught sight of a

blooming nursery-maid, at a third floor window. Fired with passion at beholding such astonishing beauty, the young man instinctively dropped on his knee, and patting his bosom, made an extravagant pantomimic declaration of love. The effect produced was immense. The populace, which is all heart, and takes delight in anything of a Gretna-green tendency, hailed with transport this truly romantic attachment, and cheered, and cheered again, till the fair and blushing guardian of infancy, smiling modestly, withdrew, somewhat embarrassed by being so unexpectedly made the object of universal admiration.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Brandon, who had been jealously watching the professor during his extraordinary performance, suddenly pushed his way through the crowd, and seizing the acrobat from behind, expressed his gratification at having caught him at last, and his determination not to lose sight of him in future. In answer to this menace, the professor began to weep passionately; and when Mr. Brandon attempted to force him away, his resistance became so violent, that Mr. Brandon was obliged to summon the beadle of the square to his assistance—representing to that cautious functionary that he knew the boy well, and was resolved upon taking him home, and delivering him up to his disconsolate parents. The professor, however, who vehemently denied these assertions, refused to budge an inch, but commenced kicking and plunging with all his might, in which he was encouraged by the spectators, whose abhorrence of such unconstitutional oppression vented itself in outcries of “shame,” “let him go,” and so on; while an excited female, *with an infant in arms*, indignantly demanded of

the panting Brandon if he called himself a man and a father?

There is no surmising to what result the public excitement might have conducted—small pebbles were already in course of discharge at Mr. Brandon's hat and legs, when the commotion was quelled by the professor adroitly tripping up both his antagonists; and, as the crowd gladly opened a passage for his escape, he ran off, pursued by Mr. Brandon and the beadle, till he reached the corner of a street where a hackney-coach was standing, when the professor suddenly sprang up to the coach-box beside a kind-hearted old jarvey, who willingly made room for him, and as, laughing, though with tears in his eyes, he was driven off by his protector, the latter looked round and waved his whip triumphantly at the discomfited Brandon, who was left behind exposed to the taunts of a juvenile mob, and the irony of a farrier on horseback, who invited him to mount, and politely offered, not only to accompany him in pursuit of the fugitive, but to accept one-half of the twenty thousand pounds, which he doubted not would be given by a liberal government for his apprehension.

CHAPTER IX.

Let folly sport her curricie and bays,
 An humble Jehu claims our tuneful praise.
 Firm on his box, behold th' enlighten'd mind
 That ope the door of knowledge to mankind :
 To him pale want and ignorance repair,
 And these his learning, those his larder share ;
 While youth and age, with one accordant lip,
 Applaud alike his wisdom and his whip.

THE JARVIAD.

MR. JOSEPH WESTMINSTER—or, as he was called by his compeers, for brevity's sake, ' Old Joe West.'—was a hackney-coachman, in his own right. For this high honour he was indebted partly to his own frugal habits, which had enabled him to set apart some portion of his annual income to accumulate at compound interest, and partly to an old apoplectic ' waterman,' who, dying unmarried and without issue, bequeathed to his long-established friend Mr. West. the whole of his personal estate, in token of his esteem for one who, during twenty years and upwards, had been his most munificent patron. With the proceeds of this consolidated fund, Joe purchased a commodious vehicle, built apparently in the reign of Queen Anne, and which had formerly belonged to a dowager-duchess, whose armorial bearings were emblazoned on the panels, and which, with its crimson hammercloth and yellow tassels, *had an old-fashioned, aristocratic, and imposing*

appearance. So unique was Joe's equipage, that it was difficult to say whether the horses had been made for the coach, or the coach for the horses, or whether they had both come into existence at the same period of time; though, looking at their venerable aspect, the latter undoubtedly seemed the most plausible supposition.

In person Mr. West. was a portly, ruddy, wrinkled, and pleasant-looking old gentleman, with a benevolent double chin, and a perpetual twinkle in his small gray eye, which rendered it questionable whether his weak point was philanthropy or fun. He always wore boots with mahogany tops, a striped calamanco waistcoat, and a drab greatcoat, with a pyramid of capes, which, cut up and converted into breeches, might have sufficed to clothe a moderate-sized charity school.

Though Mr. West. had no children living, he was a sort of voluntary father to a host of hungry boys, who used to congregate about the various coach-stands, where he might happen to be located. In fact, from his charitable practice of giving almost indiscriminate shelter to the houseless, his coach had acquired the designation of the 'Ragged Orphan Asylum,' or 'Nightly Refuge for the Destitute.' Joe used to tell a good story—one of a hundred—in relation to this conversion of his vehicle into a juvenile dormitory. One night a lady and gentleman of middle age, engaged Joe in the Haymarket to take them to Brompton-grove. The lady had a small parcel with her, which happening to fall from her lap, she was stooping to pick it up, when her hand came into contact with something hard, like bones. Not knowing what to think, the startled lady shifted her seat, and looking down,

perceived, to her inexpressible terror, a naked human foot—apparently that of a child—among the straw at the bottom of the vehicle. Not doubting for a moment that it was a subject, which was being conveyed to some metropolitan dissecting-room, she gave a distinct shriek, and fainted away. Joe heard the shriek, and instantly pulled up his horses, when the cavalier, thrusting his inflamed visage out of the window, indignantly demanded what Mr. West. meant by putting the dead bodies of two children underneath the coach-seats, and insisted upon getting out immediately—which he did, followed by the convalescent, but still deeply-affected lady ; and, while Mr. West. endeavoured to explain how it was that the urchins had crept into his ‘ wehickle unbeknown to him,’ the gentleman declared violently that he would inform against him, and went off in a towering passion, without even so much as paying his fare.

Nor was Mr. West.’s sphere of usefulness limited to providing gratuitous accommodation for the ‘ improvident weary’ : he also acted as occasional schoolmaster, from whom many of the ‘ boys of London ’ derived the rudiments of that education which enabled them, as light-porters and bill-stickers, to earn an honest, if not very luxurious, living. In the hot summer afternoons, when roads were dusty, and as John Ragg says, there was ‘ nothing moving but stagnation,’ Mr. West. would have two or more shoeless urchins up on the box with him, where, by means of a well-thumbed horn-book, he succeeded in initiating them into the mysteries of English orthography ; an obligation for which—so true it is that no good action ever goes unrewarded—whenever Mr. West. felt disposed for a nap, they testified

their gratitude by reading to him, long parliamentary speeches, from fragmentary newspapers of various and unknown dates.

It was to this venerable gentleman that the professor was indebted, for his fortunate escape from his pursuer, which has been already described, and as the minstrel had no particular engagement that evening, Mr. West., who always encouraged native talent, on reaching the yard where he put up his horses, invited him home to tea—an invitation which was greedily, if not graciously, accepted.

Though a moral and well-conducted old gentleman in all other respects, Joe was a little bit of a wag in his way, and often took delight in visiting Mrs. Westminster—a comely dame, and Joseph's second blessing, with sudden and startling surprises, which, as the good lady was largely endowed with a love of the marvellous, was by no means a difficult operation, or one destitute of amusement to the experienced practitioner. Accordingly, at Joseph's sly suggestion, the professor, immediately on entering the parlour, threw himself upon his hands, and with his legs striking about in mid air, to the bewilderment of Mrs. West., who was toasting muffins, commenced singing one of his most popular Anglo-Saxon ballads, in which, however, he was suddenly interrupted by an old wall-eyed dog, which, making a sportive seizure of the professor's toes, brought him suddenly prostrate to the ground—at which Mr. West. laughed so immoderately, that his fat sides were visibly shaken, and the tears rolled down his rugged weather-beaten cheeks, till he bore some resemblance to a plump Triton, newly risen, and dripping from his oceanic bed.

“ Good gracious ! ” exclaimed Mrs. West. as the

professor, having recovered his feet, stood and gazed inquiringly at the astonished lady of the house, "Why, what in fortune's name do you call yourself, I should like to know?"

"That's my friend, Jemmy Twitter," blurted Joe, with difficulty suppressing another risible explosion; "did you take him for a monkey or a chimney-pansy?"

"You're always picking up some oddity or another—never saw such a man," said Mrs. West., resuming her toasting-fork; "it was only last week you must bring home this great ugly looking drover's dog. I wonder you don't turn the house into a merryjerry at once."

"What! poor old Scroggy!" said Joe, patting the head of the rough, ragged-looking canine quadruped, blind of one eye, who was sitting before the fire, gravely watching the muffin-toasting; "poor old Scroggy! he served his master like a faithful servant, as long as he was able, and when age and infirmity wouldn't let him work no longer, his master says to him, with tears in his eyes, 'Scroggy,' says he, 'I'm afeard I must be your executioner. I wouldn't sell you, 'cause you mightn't be well treated, and I can't afford to keep you, Scroggy,' says he; 'now, you can't go afore 'em, and turn 'em down Hosier Lane, as you used to—your sight's failing you, Scroggy, and you've lost your voice. There's not even a lamb now that cares two fardens for you, Scroggy,' and so I stepped for'ard, and volunteered to take Scroggy, and make an in-door pensioner of him. You'd have done the same, Betsy; I know you would, if you'd been in my sitewation."

Mrs. West., though subject to occasional attacks

of nervous irritability, was neither wanting in tenderness, nor insensible to flattery; and, therefore, did not attempt to repudiate a compliment distinguished by so much connubial delicacy and good taste. While she was mildly expressing her regret that Scroggy was not a pug-dog or a poodle, Mr. West. requested Professor Twitter to help him off with his box-coat, which feat, after a severe struggle, having been happily accomplished, Joe recommended his guest to step into the wash-house below, and perform his necessary ablutions, prior to taking his seat at the tea-table.

"What a boy that is, sure—ly!" said Mr. West., rubbing his forehead vigorously with his handkerchief; "I never come near his like—never."

"Oh! drat the boys," replied Mrs. West., smacking the toasted muffin with the palm of her hand, "I'm quite tired of 'em, every day you're bringing home some poor object or another. I wish to goodness you had some boys of your own, then maybe you wouldn't be so fond of other people's."

"Ah!" said Joe, sighing as he contemplated a juvenile portrait in oil-colours over the mantel-shelf, "I had a boy once, Betsy, and a brave one he was, too; but that was long afore your time. Well, he's better provided for, let us hope, poor Freddy!" Mr. West. winked very hard for a second or two, and then, with a sudden elevation of his spirits and his voice, he called to Jemmy Twitter, and desired him, when he'd done rubbing a hole in the jack-towel to come forward, and show himself like a gentleman.

"All right, gov'nor!" replied a smothered voice from the scullery, "get your pannum ready."

"I wonder," said Mrs. West., taking a leviathan loaf into her matronly lap, "I wonder that you don't turn schoolmaster at once, as you 're so fond of boys' society."

"Well, Betsy," replied Joe, spreading his handkerchief carefully over his knees, "I've often thought when the roads have been very dry, and business at a stand-still in consequence, that I'd sell off the vehicle, and set myself up as a parochial educator."

"I'm sure, Mr. West., you sha'n't do no such thing," cried Mrs. West., with an air of decision; "a pretty idea truly! people would say we'd come down in the world indeed, after keeping our carriage all these years."

"There, Betsy, my love, you're wrong, with all due difference," replied Mr. West.; "the educator, when he does his duty as sich, is not so much behind us carriage-folks as you seem to imagine; of course, they don't feel none of that awful responsibility, which weighs so heavy upon our purfession; to us, remember, life and property—valuables of every description, I may say, is entrusted at all hours of the night: great risks, my dear," added Mr. West., with a solemn shake of the head, "and small—wery small profits."

Here Mr. West. paused, and was about lapsing into one of his occasional fits of abstraction, when his faculties derived a pleasing stimulus from Professor Twitter, who entered the apartment, smoothing with both hands his shining hair, which had been recently immersed in a pail of water.

"Now, Jemmy," said Mr. West., pulling up one of his top-boots, at the risk of bursting a blood-vessel, "give us a song—one of your'n originals."

"Pannum first, please master," replied young Twitter, grinning widely as he seized a huge slice of bread and butter, which Mrs. West., who was propitiated by his improved appearance, handed to him on the point of a knife.

"Jemmy's a reg'lar compositor," observed Mr. West., cooling his tea in a saucer, by a series of gentle expirations; "he makes all his songs out of his own head, and without thinking of 'em beforehand, too—don't you, Jemmy?"

"I believe you, my boy," replied the improvisatore, as sitting down on a three-legged stool, he entered upon the consumption of the delicacies before him with a quiet business-like celerity, which afforded his patron so much amusement, that he could scarcely refrain from showing it by his facial distortions; at which unseemly behaviour Mrs. West. was greatly scandalised, and told her consort, pointedly, that he was a pretty person for a schoolmaster, and that such manners, however congenial they might be to some people's dispositions, were, in her humble opinion, only suitable for an academy of young bears!

This rebuke, instead of producing its proper ameliorating effect, served rather to aggravate the disorder it was intended to remove; for Professor Twitter, whose gravity had hitherto been profound, felt it no less difficult, than did his immediate benefactor, to resist Mrs. West.'s mirth-compelling suggestion of an ursine educational establishment. At this critical moment, however, Mr. West. was fortunately diverted from all seditious and inflammatory designs, by a pretty and modest-looking young woman, with roses under her neat Dunstable bonnet, who, accompanied by a

short, but stout and phlegmatic young man, presented herself, with a little hesitation, as spokeswoman, in which office her pleasing appearance, and soft musical voice, rendered her exceedingly successful.

"If you please, sir," she said, and her cheek dimpled as she glanced at her pale and anxious-looking cavalier, whose half-suppressed sighs enlisted the sympathy of Mrs. West., to whom they also afforded food for speculation,—“if you please, sir, me and this young man ——”

Here the dimples paused, being suddenly attacked with a troublesome little cough, from which Mr. West. kindly hastened to relieve her.

"I understand," he said, with a sly look; "Soreditch church, isn't it?"

A blush—no, that's too strong a term—a roseate bloom overspread the dimples, as the respondent faintly confessed the soft impeachment.

"There's a partic'lar friend of ours, sir, Miss Tilda Tallytart; maybe you happen to know the name, sir—Tallytart's Imporium, Clerkenwell Green, sir—she's going to ——"

"Soreditch?" said Joe, arching his right eyebrow.

"Yes, sir," replied the dimples, smiling. "And they've hired a very nice coach of Mr. Bodger, sir, who, I suppose, you know, sir, 'cause he recommended us to you, sir; and we was thinking, sir, if it wasn't too expensive, of spending the day altogether at Epping, near to where Fairlop Fair is generally held, on the first Friday in July, sir. What—what do you suppose would be the expense, if you please, sir?"

"Well," said Mr. West., scratching his head,

"as it's not an ordinary, but an extraordinary case, I suppose we must make allowances. I know the road well which you young people are going to travel—its hilly at parts, and parts of it is wery flat, and there's a good many 'pikes here and there, which, of course, can't be avoided."

"I thought there was no 'pikes, sir," observed the dimples, somewhat alarmed.

"That's a wery common mistake," replied Mr. West.; "but you'll find, my dear, before you've been married half as long as me and my old woman here, that there's a good many pikes—won't she, my love? Still, notwithstanding, if you can but manage to bring your horses' heads together anything like comfortably, it's more pleasanter the open country is than them narrow lanes, where two can't go abreast nohow. I speak with confidence upon this pint, my dear, having been over the ground twice already. But this ain't bis'ness, you'll say. You want my coach, and you shall have my coach, that's settled, Scroggy; and as for damages, why, we shall bring them in easy, my dear. If Bodger charges your friend Tilda, fifteen, we shall let you off for ten, and hope by so doing to make the wisit pleasant to everybody."

"Thank you, sir," said the dimples, beaming with pleasure at Mr. West.'s considerate liberality. "And, if you please, sir, would you let us have your best horses—provided, of course, that it's quite convenient to you, sir?"

"You shall, my dear; you shall have my Sunday going ones," said Joe—"will they suit you?"

"And," pursued the dimples, hastily thrusting her little trembling hand into a fancy basket, and producing therefrom two white satin rosettes, "if you

please, sir, would you have any objection to put these on the horses' heads, sir? 'The Tallytarts are going to have ornaments on theirs, sir, and, of course, we shouldn't like to do otherwise than the Tallytarts, you know, sir."

Mr. West. expressed his unqualified acquiescence in the propriety of these views, and after whispering a few words to the silent young man of the phlegmatic temperament, Jemima drew forth another rosette, which she tendered to Mr. West., and requested the additional favour of his wearing it personally on the auspicious occasion, which, Joseph ceremoniously assured her, would afford him great satisfaction. Having thrice informed him of the hour, at which his attendance would be required, and bade good-evening, both to Mrs. West. and Professor Twitter, Jemima and her fat little beau departed, highly gratified with the result of their negotiation.

A knocking at the street-door, which was opened by a lodger, threw Mrs. West. into a state of painful surprise and trepidation. 'Who *could* that be?' was the question which she addressed to no one in particular; and, before she could receive an answer, a sonorous voice was heard ascending the staircase, which Professor Twitter appeared to recognise, for, with terror depicted in his visage, he entreated Mr. West. to put on his great-coat instantly, so that he might stand behind him, secure from observation. Old Joe had just time to struggle into his box-coat, and was standing in front of the fire, *dos-a-dos* to the improvisatore, when Mr. Marmaduke Brandon entered the apartment, bearing *his hat and his gold-headed cane* in his hand.—*Mr. Brandon was always so excessively polite: in*

his own classical phraseology he was a 'perfect gent. !'

"I believe, sir," he said, addressing Mr. West., while his countenance seemed radiant with urbanity and malice; "I believe you have a little boy here?"

"He's been gone about twenty minutes," replied Mr. West., extending the compasses formed by his top-boots, so as to afford a more ample screen to his *protégé*; "if you was to walk fast, you might possibly overtake him—mightn't he, my dear?"

Though almost dumb-founded by the audacity of her consort, Mrs. West. might have returned an awkward answer to this appeal, had not Jemmy Twitter, feeling that his preservation was at feminine discretion, kept his kindling eye upon her with a menacing expression, that completely deprived the poor lady of all command over her organs of speech.

"Gone, has he?" said Mr. Brandon, taking a cursory survey of the cornices of the apartment; "I'm sorry for that—he's a very bad character, is that boy—a very bad character, indeed."

"Is he, sir?" returned Mr. West.; "I shouldn't have thought it to look at him, appearances is so deceptive."

"Oh, shocking!" replied Mr. Brandon, glancing cautiously along the skirting boards, as if he were searching for a rat; "he stopped an old lady on the Harrow-road last week, ma'am, and robbed her."

Mrs. West. instinctively pushed back her chair, she could bear the professor's eye no longer—it was awful.

"And robbed her, ma'am, of her purse, containing a considerable sum of money in silver, a bunch of keys, and a smelling bottle."

Mrs. West. grew pale with suppressed excitement. "She has been attended ever since," pursued Mr. Brandon, "by Sir Astley Cooper ; but that she will ever get over it is, I fear, all but impossible—the nerves, ma'am, you know, are delicate things."

"They are indeed, sir," said Mrs. West. in a faint voice.

"What a silly old lady it must have been," cried Joseph, laughing with some difficulty, "to let an infant like that rob her of her keys, and her smelling bottle—why didn't she box his ears, and send him about his business?"

"It's all very well to talk," said Mrs. West., pathetically appealing to Mr. Brandon ; "is it not, sir?"

"No, my dear," returned her lawful spouse, "it's not very well to talk—it's very unpolite to interrupt a gentleman when he's speaking."

"I've no doubt, Mr. West.—I believe that's your name?" Mr. Brandon paused for a moment to watch the motions of Scroggy, who was making a sort of nasal review of his black silk stockings. "I've no doubt, Mr. West., that you are both able and willing to promote the ends of justice."

"Well, that requires con-sideration," replied the coachman, hooking his thumbs into the upper part of his waistcoat ; "it's easy enough to see the beginnings of justice, but an individual must have very good sight indeed, I fancy, to see the ends of it.—A friend of mine, whose great-grandfather foolishly put his head into Chancery, has been trying, for I don't know how many years, to get to the ends of justice, but consequence of the road winding about so much, and being so full of ruts, it is *supposed by them* wot's considered pretty good judges,

that he hasn't reached the half-way house yet a while—rayther a long stage that, you know, sir.”

It was fortunate that, during these remarks, Mr. Brandon was engaged in searching amongst some papers in his capacious pocket-book, otherwise he could scarcely but have observed the vindictive little shakes of the head which Mrs. West., having removed her chair so as to be beyond the reach of his anticipated tiger-like spring, ever and anon addressed to Professor Twitter, who, confiding in the security of the bulwark afforded by his patron's bulky person, went so far as to treat these reproachful gestures, with exasperating tokens of derision.

“Here is a five-pound note,” said Mr. Brandon, clasping his pocket-book, “which I will leave with you, Mr. West.; and, as soon as you deliver up the boy Twitter to myself, or to some parish constable, of which I shall receive notice, you may consider this note as your own.”

“You are very good, sir,” replied Mr. West., thrusting his hands into his great-coat pockets; “but I can't do it—it's im-possible.”

“Why so?” demanded Mr. Brandon.

“Because I'm afeard,” returned Mr. West., with a shrewd glance at his generous visitor,—“I'm afeard it would be too much like the 'pounding of felony. If Jemmy Twitter is such a desperate young willin as you 'present him to be, it's a pity you charitable gentlemen should throw away your money in attempting his reclamation. If I find him guilty when I catch hold of him, I shall be wery happy to place him quite at your disposal, gratis. Wirtue is its own reward.”

Mr. Brandon expressed his approbation of these sentiments; and as he moved towards the door,

Mr. West. followed him with a candle, as also did Jemmy Twitter, walking crab-wise till he reached the landing place, when he effected his retreat back into the parlour, by creeping on his hands and knees. As Mr. Brandon was descending the stairs, his attention was arrested by a female voice pouring forth a torrent of small invectives, amongst which he clearly distinguished those of 'lazy—idle—dog you;' whereupon he paused, and looked, not only inquiringly, but suspiciously, at Mr. West., who carelessly observed, that it was only his old lady talking to 'Scroggy,' as she was in the habit of doing when left alone, with which explanation Mr. Brandon seemed perfectly satisfied, and took his leave forthwith.

When Mr. West. returned to his apartment, he found the professor capering about, whistling, and snapping his fingers, with the most exuberant manifestations of joy at his miraculous escape, while Mrs. West., sitting erect in her arm-chair, with a watchful, composed, but resolute demeanour, was evidently preparing herself for the delivery of an evening lecture, from which Joseph anticipated deriving little pleasure, but great moral profit.

CHAPTER X.

Away! bold lover, and mirthful maid;
Up and away to the sun-lit glade.
Better by far than painted pomp,
Is a joyous dance or an innocent romp,
With hearts like the red-deer bounding free,
Under the waving green-wood tree.

THE FORESTER'S INVITATION.

THE Guelphs and Ghibelins, whose dissensions caused so much bloodshed, and shook Florence to her centre, during the latter part of the thirteenth century, present an historical parallel to the Griddles and Petmans, whose unhappy bickerings distracted the neighbourhood in which they dwelt, towards the close of that memorable winter, which has left an indelible impression upon every inhabitant of our mother-land, and whose severity was so ably vaticinated by the prophet Murphy. The feud between the Griddles and the Petmans originated in this wise :—Jonathan Petman, who held the ambulatory office of East India messenger, being cousin by marriage to the Duke of York's poulterer, was looked up to, by an extensive circle, with feelings of unavoidable envy and respect. When England, anxious to testify her admiration of one of her most illustrious generals, erected a column in commemoration of his achievements, Jonathan Petman, a gallant and unembarrassed bachelor, taking a personal interest in the monument, to which he was (by courtesy) so closely allied, invited the Griddles to pay

a visit to the ducal column, and contemplate the surprising prospect, which, on payment of sixpence, might be enjoyed from its lofty summit. The invitation was accepted, but picture to yourself the secret indignation of Mrs. Griddle, when Mr. Jonathan Petman was 'mean enough' to permit her to pay out of her own individual pin-money, for a gratification which she naturally expected was to be free of all expense whatever. The hostility thus engendered between the commodious house of Griddle, and the airy apartments of Petman, raged for some weeks with undiminished violence; but was at length happily extinguished by Jemima Griddle meeting 'promiscuously' with Peter Petman, second cousin of Jonathan, and the heir-apparent to his father's perfumery, at the anniversary ball of the *illuminati*, better known as the 'Incorporated Improved Benevolent Society of Metropolitan Lamp Illuminators.' A polka and a flirtation paved the way to a declaration; and after some delay, and many tearful entreaties on Jemima's part, owing to Mrs. Griddle's inveterate opposition to any branch of the Petman family, true love triumphed over maternal pride, and a day was fixed for the joining of hands, and the restoration of harmony.

Jemima Griddle had a particular acquaintance named Matilda Tallytart, who, like herself, was an accomplished folder of fancy envelopes. Mr. Tallytart kept an outfitting warehouse on Clerkenwell Green, in the window of which it was announced, that all articles purchased at that emporium, might be paid for by weekly instalments. Now Tilda Tallytart was engaged to a genteel young man, named Everton Toffey, whose only fault—barring *a rigid tuft of hair* on the crown of his head, and

which nothing would mollify — was a somewhat reserved and dilatory disposition, which prevented him from instituting that delicate inquiry which, in all well-regulated families, is looked for after the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth invitation to tea, and the second or third visit to Greenwich, and the Surrey Zoological Gardens. However, when Peter Petman had popped the perplexing question to Jemima Griddle, and had received from that ingenuous young person a satisfactory answer, the impatience of her dear friend, Matilda Tallytart, could no longer be restrained, and she accordingly intimated to Everton, with as much tenderness as possible, that if he still entertained serious doubts of the propriety of matrimony, it would be more agreeable to her, that he should mention them at once, instead of postponing their disclosure for five or ten years, when they might not be quite so easily disposed of. Upon this hint, Everton spake: the result was a clandestine compact between Jemima and Matilda, for the weddings to take place together, and a generous determination to celebrate the combined nuptials with two hackney-coaches, and a pic-nic party; the skirts of Epping Forest being judiciously chosen as the place of rendezvous.

And rejoiced are we to announce that this sylvan scheme—these hymeneal festivities, so redolent of Arcadia in its palmy days—met with all but universal admiration, the sole dissentient being an elderly aunt of the Griddles, who, not having been invited to the *fête*, spoke of it in terms of bitter derision, and earnestly wished that it might rain pitchforks.

Despite of these pernicious aspirations, the day was *delightful*; so were the Griddles; so were the

Petmans; so were the Tallytarts; so were the Toffeys—a little warm, perhaps, but not unpleasantly so. As not even Love—though a great botanist in his way—can live upon flowers, ample provision was made for the comfort of the ‘creature,’ a fact which two deformed hampers on the respective coach-boxes, proclaimed to all whom that gratifying information might concern. Deeply do we regret that to us hath not been given the pencil, and the faculty divine, to paint in appropriate colours that sumptuous banquet, which, distributed over a snow-white table-cloth, margined by the green sward, and canopied by the spreading elms of Hainault forest, might have tempted the fastidious Hamadryads themselves to become carnivorous. The *carte* embraced two Mammoth rump-steak and oyster pies, two smaller medley ditto, and three dozen tastefully scalloped pudding ditto; a marvellous round of corned beef, flanked by a real Middlesex ham; a section of a Pennsylvanian cheese; some cold vegetables (for Miss Sarah Griddle exclusively); and a bottle of mixed pickles. To set all these delicacies afloat, there were sundry stone-bottles, whose motto was—*pro omnibus bibo*, and which, on the extraction of the bungs, exhaled most powerful and affecting perfumes. For dessert, there was an arsenal of nuts—Spanish, wood, and cocoa; and, in order that nothing might be wanting to make the *fête-champetre* as *recherché* as possible, Mr. George Griddle had brought his melodious violin, in a green baize bag; and old Charley Bantam, commonly called the ‘little warbler,’ had furnished himself with a roll of ballads (measuring ten feet *eight inches*), and from which he purposed making *liberal quotations* in the course of the afternoon.

The *arbiter elegantiarum* of the party was, of course, that gallant and unembarrassed bachelor (cousin by marriage to the Duke of York's poulterer), Jonathan Petman, who, in his office as an East India messenger, wore on this occasion the collar of S.S. (scarlet stuff) attached to a mulberry coloured frock-coat, black velveteen small clothes, and long drab gaiters; a large oval medal on his breast, highly polished with plate powder, which he exhibited as the insignium of his rank, reflecting much credit upon his housekeeper. At once, the Beau Nash, and Beau Brummel of the company, Jonathan Petman did the honours with an ease, a grace, and agility, which excited no less admiration than did his handsome figure, supported as it was by a pair of gaitered limbs whose faultless symmetry, when performing the Highland fling in the rotunda of the St. Helena tea-gardens, was the universal topic of conversation among the *élite* of Maze Pond.

Next to Jonathan Petman, the most conspicuous and popular member of the pic-nic party was 'Charley Bantam,' a stout and jovial-looking old gentleman in a white hat, worn very much off his head, and whose dreaminess of eye and loquacious dogmatical tone, engendered a strong suspicion that he had been out rather late last night, and was still (in a moral point of view) not quite at home this morning. Nor did this conjecture lose ground, by the well-known fact of Charley Bantam being a P.G.M.N.O. (past grand master of the noble order) of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, by which chivalrous corporation, his powers as an amateur vocalist, were highly appreciated and extolled.

As soon as the corks were drawn, Charley Ban-

tam, sitting on the grass with the brim of his white hat, pointing almost perpendicularly to the sky, a large stone-bottle between his legs, and surrounded by his ardent admirers, held up a melodramatic drinking-horn, like that used by Grindoff in the cavern scene of the 'Miller and his Men,' which he ordered Griddle to fill continually—a laborious service, which that persevering brazier performed with all becoming diligence.

"Mothers and daughters," cried Bantam, holding the foaming goblet before him ; " I'm about to give you a (hiccup) toast: you know that people talk about this, and that, and t'other being the happiest day of their lives—it's all (hiccup) fudge. Don't believe 'em—Griddle, fill this horn—they are miserable people, all of 'em, only they're ashamed to own it. Now, there's young Toffey there, who makes no remarks, but takes it all for granted, he fancies this is the happiest (hiccup) day of his life, because Tilda tells him so (laughter), the artful little baggage (great laughter). Fathers of families, you know what happiness is—so do I—so does every body—Griddle, fill this horn.—Now there's my god-daughter, Mrs. Peter Petman—Jemima Griddle that was at half-past nine this morning—she's all smiles, and bloom, and dimples you see, as if such things were made to (hiccup) last—stuff! they're like your dandified little shiny leather boots, pretty to look at, and not dear perhaps, considering ; but, if you want something serviceable, Griddle, do as I've done, lay in a good stock of wrinkles and frowns, which, like a tough old pair of British bluchers, you'll find to be everlasting wear."

This odd recommendation caused a titter among the ladies, and a general winking of eyes at one another

among the gentlemen, during which Mrs. Bantam solemnly raised her own to the blue firmament, and sighed to think there was no such thing as conscience, to smite the unblushing fibber.

"And now I'll give you a toast," pursued Mr. Bantam, looking thoughtfully in the festive cup; "here's mothers and daughters—fathers of families—bridegrooms and brides—bless 'em all; and, last of all, here's old Griddle—(fill this horn)—may he live till his hair is as white as my hat, and may he always appear as respectable." Immense laughter, and loud cries from all quarters of—"Griddle, fill this horn!"

Having finished his facetious oration, and adjusted his cravat, the bow of which had worked its way round to his left ear, Mr. Bantam spread out his ten feet of lyrical poetry before him, and kindly volunteered to oblige his friends with a song. Accordingly, after some little time occupied in clearing his voice, he succeeded in executing the annexed ballad, in the usual unknown tongue of an Anglo-Irish comic vocalist.

Sure Love is a vile little shirtless tormentor,
 His mother, too, is of all feeling bereft;
 But if Vanus will chain us, why, who can prevent her?
 And when your heart's gone, you've no palce of mind left.
 Love's a Will-o'-the-wisp—to a deep ditch he'll guide us,
 Where in anguish we tumble and flounder about,
 Then he pulls off his mask, and begins to deride us,
 'Cause he knows that once in we can niver get out.
 Singing filaloo, kilaloo—O! what a smother!
 The dear craters for marcy beseechingly call;
 If I marry one, why it's killing each other—
 Och! Parliment-house let me marry them all.
 There's Kathleen's bright eyes, for which hundreds are sighing,
 To think of the mischief they've already done;
 When their glance falls upon me, I fancy I'm dying,
 For my heart melts like butter that's left in the sun.
 When she smiles, you'd suppose all the iligant fairies
 Were dancing at one o' their thrapenny hops;
 Her voice is so musical—nought like it there is—
 When she sings, the nightingale instantly stops.
 Singing filaloo, &c.

For Ellen's sweet lips, arn't I constantly weeping?
 More luscious than peaches, more rosy than wine,
 As one day on a soft mossy bank she lay sleeping,
 A hungry bee lighted upon them to dine;
 Indignant I flew, and a stern rebuke gave it,
 By snatching it up 'twixt my teeth, so uncouth;
 When suddenly—though perhaps some here won't belave it—
 The honey ran out o' both sides o' my mouth.
 Singing flaloo, &c.

Such a nate little foot has my Norah—be alsy!
 And never before me again let it pass;
 As it trips o'er the meadow, it don't touch a daisy,
 But you'd think 't were a little white mouse in the grass;
 At a fair or a christ'ning, a wake or a wedding,
 In each jig it performs so divinely its part,
 That the boys shout out 'murder!' while I stand by dreading
 Lest that little foot should run off with my heart.
 Singing flaloo, &c.

By Killarney's dark lake, there's a maiden who wanders
 Or sits on the dizzy cliff, pensive and lone;
 Grief shades her pale brow as she tearfully ponders
 On hopes that are blighted, and days that are gone;
 The youth that ador'd her, and whom she lov'd dearly,
 In deep ocean slumbers where no passions stir,
 She tells the sad tale to the cold winds sincerely,
 And as I love sad stories, of course I love her.
 Singing flaloo, &c.

My heart this same love, does torment so and bother,
 Like a bird that's let loose, in a fruiterer's shop;
 It looks at one sweet thing, and then at the other,
 But can't make its mind up, on which first to hop
 If Kathleen I wed, then foul envy will lurk
 In poor Norah's bosom, whose love is not small;
 Faith! a thought has just struck me—bedad! I'll turn Turk,
 And then, be my sowl! can't I marry them all?
 Singing flaloo, &c.

Encouraged by the flattering applause with which his humble efforts were rewarded, the 'little warbler' generously announced his intention, of obliging with some further extracts from his voluminous budget; and was about making preparations for that purpose, when, to his severe astonishment, he discovered that there was a rival in the field, and that a large share of public attention was being engrossed, by a 'young varlet' in a soldier's coat and black small-clothes, who was standing on his hands, and singing, as he

clapped together his shoeless feet, such miserable doggrel as fairly set Mr. Bantam's teeth on edge—a contemptuous expression which, we apprehend, the subjoined specimen will fully justify:—

“ You all have seen the setting sun
Afore he vent to bed ;
But now you see another son,
Vot stands upon his head—
Ri tol looral,” &c. &c.

Mrs. Griddle was also highly incensed at this unmannerly and unauthorized intrusion; and addressing Joe West. as ‘ Mr. Coachman,’ she desired him to order the boy to go away immediately—for, as Mrs. Griddle justly observed, ‘ they had no occasion for purfessionals—they was all very well able to sing for themselves.’

“ Now, Jemmy,” said Mr. West., looking as grave as possible, “ you must go and wersify in another street—company won’t have no purfessionals here; it ain’t genteel.”

The improvisatore regarded his patron and tutelary-guardian with an arch, insinuating look; and assuming an obsolete, but once popular, half-manual, half-nasal gesture, he exclaimed—“ Don’t you like it, master?—Walker!”

The tone, manner, and relative position of the actors in this little interlude—old Joe West., with his pretended gravity, and the butt-end of his whip resting on the ground, like a respectable magician; the improvisatore, in his military equipments and bare legs (his epaulettes seeming as if his wings had recently been clipped)—brought forcibly before the spectator’s mental eye that charming scene in which the ‘ dainty Ariel,’ addressing Prospero, says, “ Do you love me, master?—No!” What a beauti-

ful counterpart to the roguish interrogatory of Jemmy Twitter—"Don't you like it, master?—Walker!"

With this artful insinuation, and shaking his head knowingly at Mr. West., 'Young Flibberty-gibbet' (as Joe called him) threw a summerset or two, and then trundled himself off like a hoop into the forest, where he derived some amusement from challenging those congenial spirits the squirrels to feats of agility, and beating them upon their own ground.

A fire having been kindled, and Spiller's celebrated kettle brought into requisition, preparations on an extensive scale were made for doing justice to the cup that cheers but not inebriates; pending which, Mr. Joseph West. and his friend Mr. Bodger rambled into a secluded and narrow path bounded by blackberry-bushes, where their heavy drab overcoats, top-boots, and whips, created no slight sensation amongst the bright-eyed little denizens of the forest, who naturally wondered what could possibly have induced those Cockney barbarians to wander so far from their native turbulence and smoke.

Bodger was a hard-featured man of strong feelings and morbid prejudices. His never-ending grievance was the 'meteriopolitan magistrate'—an order of satraps, upon which Bodger would expatiate for hours, with unchristian virulence.

Strolling along, with his hands folded behind him, Mr. West. began to moralize in a Solomon-like strain of wisdom, of which our space will only allow us to present one or two specimens.

"Well," said Mr. West., looking up philosophically at the chestnut-trees, "the country certainly *is wery, wery beautiful*; but I must confess, that I

give the preference to Cheapside. None of their Maypoles can come up to our Monument; and as for their prospects, what are they when put alongside of our Lord Mayor's Show?"

"I don't approve of that there Show," replied Bodger, thrusting his arm determinately into his greatcoat-pocket—"not by no means, I don't. What right have they to blockade the main public thoroughfares of that there great metropolis? Why are my hosses to suffer 'cause they will make a hexhibition of the Mare?"

"Of a summer's evening," observed Mr. West., calmly pursuing the original train of his reflections, "I've heered some 'fatuated people say, that to walk up a hill between two hedgerows is heavenly: it may be, or it may not—but for my part, I'd much rayther, on a fine Sunday, when the days are at the longest, after I've been a-listening to an authordox sermon at one of the old city churches, take a pleasant stroll down the shady side of Old Broad Street. Over and over again, when the sun's been setting beautifully on the chimneys, have I stood with my eyes fixed upon the offices of the 'Real del Monte Mining Association,' till the tears came into 'em. It's sweet, altho' its melancholy, to stop afore the Excise, and ponder o'er the wisions of the past."

"When are they goin' to throw open Fleet-street agin, I should like to know?" demanded Bodger, tying an extra knot in the thong of his whip. "How much longer are we to be driven all round them houses? Three blessed weeks have they bin about that there job, and the meteriopolitan magistracy will *not* interfere; and yet they call themselves Justices!" And Bodger's lip curled with a smile of sarcasm perfectly Mephistophelian.

Mr. West. felt that in Bodger's present unhappy frame of mind, all attempts to inspire him with a love of the beautiful must be unavailing, and having no sympathy with his morbid prejudices, Joseph prudently abstained from making any further remarks, and the two coachmen strolled along in silence, till they reached the rendezvous from whence they started, where they found an attentive circle of ladies and gentlemen, who were listening to a political discussion between Mr. Griddle and Mr. Toffey *père*, the subjects being, the European balance of power, the aggressive policy of Russia, the holy alliance, and the prospect of war all over the world.

Toffey was a renowned foreign politician, and being a tailor, always carried a small piece of pipe-clay in his waistcoat-pocket, with which he was now describing two parabolic figures at right angles to each other, on the under side of Mrs. Griddle's tea-tray, for the better illustration of his argument.

"There's Roosher, and there's Proosher," said Toffey, pointing to the diagram, which, after attentively contemplating for a few minutes, Griddle, who was a man of few words and sluggish imagination, pronounced to be 'good.'

"Wery well, then," pursued Toffey, with increased animation, "Roosher, which we'll say is here, sends out her armies here and here, and here and there;" and Toffey drew radiating lines to the cardinal points of the compass. "Do you understand?"

Griddle nodded; for he would not have told an untruth on any account.

"Now, then," continued Toffey, folding his arm with unbounded confidence in his own resources "what becomes of Proosher?"

Griddle leaned his chin upon his hand, and looked very earnestly at the tea-board, with knitted brow and contracted lips. He could not clearly see the exact force of Toffey's argument; but he gave it a sort of qualified assent, by an ejaculation of 'hum.'

"Consequently," said Toffey, drawing a vast circle on the tea-board; "consequently, Roosher has us com-pletely: we can't stir hand nor foot against her: she can throw such a line round us as will tie us up in less than no time, in a manner o' speaking. Mark my words! Aggrawate her, and she'll do it."

"How?" demanded Griddle, winking with argumentative energy.

"How?" rejoined Toffey, measuring his opponent from his crown to his watch-seals. "Can we do in such a variable climate as ourn, without fire and candle?"

"Not at all," rejoined Griddle, with firmness.

"And can we have fire and candle," said Toffey, "without timber and taller?"

Griddle reflected for a moment, and then answered emphatically, "No."

"And don't all our timber and taller come from Roosher?" exclaimed Toffey, putting his pipe-clay in his pocket, as if he should have no further occasion for it. "Let Roosher shut to her ports and keep in her exportations, where are we?—that's the question. Where are we? Why, in darkness wisible; how are we? Frizen."

Griddle heaved a half-suppressed groan, and scratched his pericranium severely, but it was of no avail; he could not follow the minute ramifications of Toffey's intricate logic; he had already got into a maze, and he scarcely knew how to extricate

himself; he might have kept pace with Toffey at one time when in his youthful vigour, but as a tinman and brazier of late years, his intellectual powers had been cramped and weakened by intense application to soldering. He gave it up.

As we stated before, Mr. Tallytart had brought with him his Cremona, so that the votaries of Terpsichore might not be disappointed, in the event of no itinerant violinist coming forward, to undertake the musical department on this festive occasion. The M. C. was, of course, that gallant and unembarrassed bachelor, J. Petman, and it was pretty generally expected, that he would have opened the ball with his celebrated Highland fling; but this honour the bachelor most gallantly declined, and insisted upon Mr. and Mrs. Peter Petman (late Griddle), leading off in the *contré-danse* of Sir Roger de Coverley, which they did, with great *éclat*; for Peter, though inclined to be stout, and not gifted with strong powers of respiration, wore thin nankeen trousers and light pumps, which partly counterbalanced these constitutional drawbacks. The only gentleman who wished to be excused dancing altogether, was that attenuated and amiable person, Everton Toffey, who carried Tilda's new parasol under his arm, and to overcome whose fastidious scruples, the physical force of two middle-aged ladies was employed with the happiest results, the real motive of Everton's refusal (so it was whispered) being a nervous fear of deranging his elegant sky-blue embroidered satin long-ended stock, which was plaited all down the front very prettily, in imitation of a shroud, and ornamented with a garnet pin, resembling a small jam tart. The great feature, however, of the *bal* was Mr. Charles

Bantam, who, assisted by Mrs. Griddle, displayed an indefatigable activity, and decision of purpose, which elicited, as they rushed down the middle and back again, the wildest tokens of gratification from all present, the ill-conditioned Bodger, of course, always excepted. General was the clapping of hands, loud and hearty was the cheering, vigorous and startlingly brisk was the fiddling, when at the height of their gallopade, Bantam's white hat flew off, and in looking round for it, he missed his footing, and fell backwards as if to provide an elastic couch for his partner, Mrs. Griddle, of which that substantial lady availed herself without further invitation.

Fortunately, no damage was done beyond a little momentary embarrassment on the lady's part; and the festivities were about to be resumed, when loud cries of 'Help! help!' which proceeded from the depths of the forest, excited a universal feeling of astonishment and alarm. The most active members of the party immediately started off in the direction from whence the cries arose, which, though repeated at intervals, became every moment less distinct, as if the unhappy creature who gave them utterance, was being rapidly hurried along by his captors. At length the cries died away entirely, and the stragglers were returning, in deep perplexity to the spot, where their friends remained anxiously waiting the result of their exertions, when suddenly a farmer's lad, in a round frock, came running up, and told them that two men, one of whom carried a sack on his shoulder, had been pursuing through the forest, a boy about his own size, and he feared that they had succeeded in catching him, and carrying him off against his in-

clination. From the description, no doubt existed that the boy in question was the unfortunate *Jemmy Twitter*; but what motive there could have been for any person kidnapping a poor outcast like that, no one could divine. Appeals were made to *Mr. West*, as the boy's supposed guardian, but in vain. Poor old *Joe* seemed completely paralyzed by the intensity of his sympathy, and the big tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, as with his eyes bent on the ground, and surrounded by the awe-struck crowd, he murmured to himself—"Poor *Jemmy*! poor *Jemmy*! I should have thought your innocence would have protected you; but it often happens, that they become the greatest victims wot never injured a fellow creetur's hair in their lives, and never stood on nobody's head 'cepting and saving their own."

The sun went down in crimson splendour behind the shadowy and silent forest; the soft wind sighed along the bladed grass, or stirred the whispering leaves; but the gloom which was stealing over hill and moorland was not more profound, than that which had gathered round the hearts of young and old, in their compassion for an unknown vagrant boy. So true it is that the chain of humanity is not composed exclusively of golden links—the same cloud darkens the palace and the hovel; and not even the beggar's staff can fall from his hand, but it causes a sympathetic vibration in the monarch's sceptre.

CHAPTER XI.

Here we have plot and counterplot,
And as one valiant host attacks the fort,
Another cuts the ground from under it;
While mighty Jove on high, with brow austere,
His flood-dispensing engines summons forth,
And swallows up both camp and citadel.

MELEPOTATUS.

A WEEK, an eventful week, had elapsed since the unexpected appearance of Lord Petersham, had created a revolution in the feelings and prospects of the inmates of Shuttleworth Hall. Walter Brandon was already far, far at sea, having first exchanged vows of unalterable affection with Mary Shuttleworth; and the pangs of separation from one whose memory she so fondly cherished, derived but little alleviation from the marked, though formal, attentions bestowed upon her by her saturnine-looking relative, the *pseudo* Lord Petersham. Hitherto Mr. Shuttleworth had held no conversation with Mary, beyond what has been already stated in reference to her acceptance of Staunton as a suitor. He was waiting for his promised communication from Mr. Brandon; till then his ambition languished for lack of its proper stimulant, and his plans were not susceptible of complete development. The appearance of Staunton was by no means calculated to inspire confidence, or to induce those who were interested in his pretensions, to dispense with further evidence of their validity. In general company, his perfect reserve was regarded by Mr.

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Shuttleworth as the infallible token of high breeding, and as indicating an essentially aristocratic frame of mind. Not a movement nor a gesture of his noble nephew escaped Mr. Shuttleworth's vigilant observation, but was sure to be commented upon at the first opportunity in Mary's presence and hearing. The poor girl's heart sank as she listened to these perpetually glowing encomiums; and a sort of instinctive apprehension pervaded her mind, that sooner or later those rosy bowers of bliss, which her young fancy had so long been fabricating in secret, would vanish for ever, and be succeeded by a gloomy desert, where some dark wanderer pointed to a nameless and a solitary grave.

The embarrassments of Shuttleworth Hall, however, extended beyond the narrow circle in which Lord Petersham exercised a concentrated influence. Poor Lady Bloomsbury suffered materially in her mind, by reason of the unsettled position of her daughter Helen, who, it may be remembered, was engaged to Captain Hipplesley, upon certain conditions, which, if not expressed, were, by one of the contracting parties at least, most distinctly understood. Day after day did Lady Bloomsbury diligently search the writings of the journalists, to see if any rumours were in circulation of the dreaded marriage of Hipplesley's uncle, old Lord Kew, to whom he was heir-presumptive; and more firm became her resolve to prohibit all communication between Captain Hipplesley and Helen, when that deprecated alliance being a *fait accompli*, the captain himself must inevitably lose caste, and disappear from the rank of first class suitors, to be rated on Almack's books with those unworthy vessels, the 'detrimentals,' in whose dreary fortunes any expe-

rienced chaperon would shudder at the bare idea of her protégée's perilous embarkation. But though, Captain Hippesley's hopes of accession to the peerage being utterly annihilated, Helen would, of course, be reduced to the painful necessity of discountenancing any claim upon her affections, which his personal merits might unhappily have established, still Lady Bloomsbury could not reconcile her active benevolence to a decree of entire and perpetual banishment. The proud divinity of Helen exacted all the honours, and could not be satisfied with less than a coronet. Moreover, there was in Helen's biography, one dark and melancholy chapter, to redeem which an attractive title was imperatively required. To Laura, however, none of these forcible arguments applied. She was younger, more gay, less aspiring, and had never known any greater disappointments than those for which an inattentive milliner, was occasionally responsible. Under these very peculiar circumstances, Lady Bloomsbury suggested the propriety of Laura taking an early assignment from Helen of Captain Hippesley's tender regards, than which, in the conscientious discharge of her maternal duties, Lady Bloomsbury affirmed and believed that nothing could be less objectionable, or in stricter keeping with what she regarded as the best guide for parents in all their difficulties—the usages of the 'best society.'

But, as if to show how the most meritorious designs may be frustrated, by a want of sympathy in those whose co-operation is essential to their success, Laura Bloomsbury, instead of adhering to the parental standard, had lent a too indulgent ear to the pleadings of that 'rural solicitor,' Mr. Thomas

Inglewood, who, however awkward he might be in conducting suits for his clients, had been very expert in managing his own. Emboldened by certain little tokens of encouragement which he had received, Mr. Inglewood, a few days after his introduction to Miss Laura Bloomsbury, transmitted to Shuttleworth Hall a polite note (in which Charlotte's fine Italian hand was clearly manifest), apprising Laura that the Grand Duke of Schoffen-spitzhoffel—whose name has already graced these pages—was about to make his *entrée* into N—, for which triumphal arches were then in process of erection; and offering Laura tickets for herself and friends, to view the procession from the first floor balcony of an obliging silversmith, who resided opposite the Town Hall. Unable to resist this polite temptation, Laura and Helen, accompanied by Lord Petersham and Mary Shuttleworth, to whom for the last few days his lordship had been unremitting in his sedate attentions, took their departure from Shuttleworth Hall in a barouche; and Mr. Shuttleworth being absent on business, Lady Bloomsbury was left *solus* till after luncheon; when the tedium of solitude was agreeably relieved, by an unexpected visit from Sir Otto de Beauvoir.

“I am going to surprise you, my dear Lady Bloomsbury—will you forgive me?” said Sir Otto, smiling, as he drew from the pocket of his velvet-lapelled surtout a newspaper, which he unfolded, and raising his eye-glass, quickly discovered the paragraph to which he wished to direct her ladyship's attention.

Lady Bloomsbury took the paper with a trembling hand, and having perused attentively the

chronicle of 'marriages,' silently laid it down, with an appearance of deep emotion.

"Were you quite prepared for that intelligence?" said Sir Otto, in the softest tone of sympathy.

"I was," replied Lady Bloomsbury, as some natural tears stole from behind her raised handkerchief—simple, but significant little messengers of woe.

"Well! let us hope that it is all for the best," said Sir Otto, gently beating time, as it were, with his gold-mounted eye-glass. "I trust so—I believe so—all for the best."

Lady Bloomsbury shook her head. She trusted also, and believed, in contradiction to her sighs.

"When great calamities overtake us, my dear Lady Bloomsbury," observed Sir Otto, with an air of *dilettante* stoicism — "when great calamities overtake us, which no forethought nor prudence of our own could possibly avert, our duty, no less than our wisdom, commands that we should meet them with placid resignation. What might be his age?"

"Lord Kew?—About fifty-seven, I believe."

"In-deed!—And the lady?"

"I have no idea."

"Of course," said Sir Otto, exhibiting his last new row of teeth, "I presume that all correspondence between Miss Helen and Captain Hippeley is suspended?"

Lady Bloomsbury sighed again, and sorrowfully replacing her handkerchief in her reticule, observed that it was a sad thing for poor Helen.

"Do you think she was very—very much attached?" and Sir Otto paused and waited anxiously for an answer.

"Oh dear, yes," replied Lady Bloomsbury, in great distress.

Sir Otto put his hand to his lips, and uttered a slight inarticulate ejaculation.

"Poor girl!" said Lady Bloomsbury; "she has gone through a great deal."

Sir Otto thrust his eye-glass into his bosom, and perceiving that Lady Bloomsbury had not yet quite recovered from the agitation, excited by the fatal tidings of Lord Kew's marriage, deemed it advisable, in order not to distress her ladyship by further conversation just at present, to take a quiet walk from one end of the drawing-room to the other—which he did accordingly, stopping midway to bend over and inhale the intoxicating fragrance of a splendid bouquet, in a china vase on the cheffonier.

When he returned to his seat, he was gratified at finding her ladyship looking much better.

"How will you manage to break this melancholy intelligence?" said Sir Otto; "it must be done carefully, gently—very gently."

"Helen is not altogether unprepared," replied Lady Bloomsbury: "indeed, she has been expecting it for some time; but still it will be a severe shock; one disappointment following so soon upon another."

"It is very unfortunate—distressingly so," replied Sir Otto; "and every one, I'm sure, must sympathize, deeply sympathize, with Miss Bloomsbury in these little afflictions *du cœur*, if I may so speak. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, of Rochefoucault's maxim; you know what I mean?"

Lady Bloomsbury observed that it was some years since she had read any French author. She *did not think they were proper for families.*

“‘There is something,’” pursued Sir Otto, with an air of playful hesitation “(I am quoting Rochefoucault) ‘there is something in the distresses even of our best friends, which is not altogether displeasing to us;’ it’s a French sentiment, paradoxical and apparently bitter, but there’s truth in it. I feel that there is truth in it at this present moment. Shall I go on? No. I see that you deem me uncharitable.”

“You are mistaken,” said Lady Bloomsbury, coldly; “I was not thinking so.”

“Were you not? Well then, I will explain.” Sir Otto paused, and leaning forward in his chair with a prepossessing smile, he said, confidentially, “I don’t think, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, *entre nous*,—I don’t think that the union of Helen and Captain Hipplesley would be attended with those felicitous results which you and many of her nearest and dearest friends so ardently anticipate.”

“There is no telling,” replied Lady Bloomsbury, her brow gradually resuming its native serenity; “marriage often makes a great alteration. I trust sincerely, Sir Otto, that all will be for the best.”

“Upon that point I am quite convinced,” said Sir Otto, “quite convinced. Of Captain Hipplesley, personally, I know, as you are aware, very little. I have seen him, say half a dozen times,—not more; but have never had any conversation with him worthy of the name—never. He seems to me, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, to be a passably well-bred man; but there is—at least I fancy so—there is a self-concentratedness about him, which I do not think compatible with that unfettered interchange of thought and sentiment, which constitutes the

bond and essence of connubial felicity. Am I sufficiently clear?"

"Your observation is very just, Sir Otto," replied Lady Bloomsbury. "Captain Hipposley has at times a sort of pre-occupied look. Helen herself has noticed it. I used to ascribe it to the uncertainty of his expectations, which made him more thoughtful and dejected than the generality of young men of his profession."

"No, I suspect that it is his idiosyncrasy," returned Sir Otto, elevating his expressive eyebrows; "his father, I am given to understand, was a very eccentric person, and was accustomed once in every year, to make his coachman dine with him, on which occasions he treated him with ceremonious politeness, for no better reason than because he bore a fancied resemblance to the great Marshal Saxe, that colossal warrior but indifferent grammarian; but we are digressing from our text. Helen I regard, and I believe there are hundreds who participate in this feeling,—I regard as a being of the most exalted endowments—a goddess—who demands a Raphael to appreciate and to adore her. Now, you will pardon my freedom, but is Captain Hipposley qualified to form that estimate, and to display that adoration? I think every candid mind will unhesitatingly answer—No."

Having finished this eloquent little disquisition, Sir Otto resumed his native rigidity, and tapping his gold snuff-box, seemed much gratified with the impression produced upon himself by his own eloquence.

"What do you think of my nephew, Lord Petersham?" asked Lady Bloomsbury.

Sir Otto shrugged his shoulders (he was of

French extraction), and smiled as if he could have made a revelation, but charity forbade it.

"Mr. Shuttleworth, you know, is seeking to bring about a match between him and Mary," said Lady Bloomsbury; "it is very wrong—exceedingly wrong; for what is Mary? She is a good, kind-hearted girl, but not by any means accomplished, or at all adapted to move in the best society. Oh dear, no."

"An hereditary failing, probably," suggested Sir Otto, "which art, with all its resources, is unable to supply. Nature, you know, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, is very partial—very partial in her gifts."

"My daughters have received what is called a finished education," said Lady Bloomsbury, "and are consequently fitted to adorn any society. Laura's capacity, you know, is very good; but with respect to Helen, all her masters acknowledge that she has decided talent."

"Therefore, Raphael, *must* be her worshipper," murmured Sir Otto, with an approving nod.

"So far as mind is concerned," rejoined Lady Bloomsbury, "my girls take after their poor dear father, Sir Roger, who was a man of very superior attainments, and great inventive genius. You have heard, of course, of 'Bloomsbury's patent double-action garden irrigator?'"

Sir Otto politely observed that he had been highly gratified by an inspection of it at the exhibition of the "Society of Arts," some years ago.

"Nor should I think so much of my brother's ambition in this respect," said Lady Bloomsbury, in allusion to the projected marriage of Mary Shuttleworth with her noble cousin, "were it not *that the poor girl's affections are really engaged.*"

You have seen young Walter Brandon, a very well behaved and rather handsome young man, with auburn hair, something like Laura's?"

"I have heard of such a person; he is an *employé* of Mr. Shuttleworth's, as I understand."

"He was employed in his counting-house; but my brother has recently sent him out to South America, to transact some business there; when he will return, it is impossible to say. It would therefore be very foolish of Mary to make herself unhappy on his account, though I fear the poor girl is constantly thinking of him. You know the Rev. Mr. Bleat?"

"Any relation to the Bleats of Shepherd's-vale?"

"Not that I am aware of. He comes of a very good family, and his uncle is prebend of Rochester. Now, from what I have heard and seen—this is between ourselves—but there is little doubt that Mr. Bleat has formed an attachment to Mary, although I do not think that either she or her father is at present aware of it."

"You would recommend Mr. Bleat as an eligible succedaneum (if I may use the term) for my Lord Petersham?"

"Most certainly," replied Lady Bloomsbury; "he is rather vain, which is the failing of most young clergymen; but I believe him to be truly amiable, and I really think he would make Mary a very good husband, and Helen thinks so too."

"But in that event, how do you propose disposing of your noble nephew, Lord Petersham?"

"Well, if I could only convince Helen that it would be the height of imprudence to think of an alliance with Captain Hipplesley, now that things *have taken such an unfortunate turn*, I should have

no difficulty in persuading her to bestow her hand upon Lord Petersham, who, if he is anxious to marry one of his cousins, could scarcely hesitate between Mary and Helen, supposing that Helen were in a position to entertain his addresses."

Sir Otto made a singular motion with his eyebrows and his outspread palms, which, being interpreted, signified, that of course gallantry prevented him from engaging with a lady in logical warfare, but he really could not, with every possible deference, subscribe to her ladyship's dictum.

"Helen is a girl of very good sense," said Lady Bloomsbury, apparently not observing Sir Otto's pantomimic protest; "and though it is sometimes difficult to induce her to abandon an opinion which she has formed upon mature consideration, yet she is much more accessible to reason, and consequently more tractable, than Laura; for Laura, as you must have observed, is thoughtless. I don't think she is wilful exactly, but she is so much the creature of impulse; and then she has such spirits, you see. I exceedingly regret that she should ever have formed any acquaintance with Mr. Inglewood, who is a person I don't at all approve of. Captain Hippesley, with all his deficiencies, would be infinitely preferable to him, for he is merely a solicitor."

"And what is Miss Bloomsbury's opinion of her *proposed* admirer?" inquired Sir Otto, with a very slight trace of acid in his youthful countenance.

"I don't know," said Lady Bloomsbury, confidentially; "you see my nephew's position is not yet satisfactorily established. There may be obstacles in the way of proving his pedigree, after having been so long abandoned by his unfortunate parent. Of course, he must expect some opposition from the

Linford family, who, on failure of direct heirs, would be entitled to the Petersham estates. His personal recommendations are good ; he is very well informed—has travelled a great deal, and speaks several languages fluently. Helen tells me his Italian is very pure.”

“Between friends—mere friends,” observed Sir Otto, “a community of languages may consolidate mutual esteem—mutual esteem ; but this rule does not apply to those sacred, deeply sacred engagements which are the offspring (if you will pardon me the old-fashioned expression) of love. There, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, the grand object is, to reconcile apparent incompatibilities—the gentle and the proud—the romantic and the wise—the sanguine and the sedate ; those are the couplets in the ‘Paradise Regained’ of matrimony, which are felt by a cultivated ear to be the most harmonious. You concede my first position ?”

“Helen has seen so little of her cousin at present,” said Lady Bloomsbury, “that she has scarcely been able to obtain any real insight into his disposition.”

“Miss Bloomsbury *must*,” said Sir Otto,—“it’s a strong word,—but Miss Bloomsbury must have the undivided worship of a devotee ; that is my second position.”

“I admit that Helen is rather exacting.”

“Not unreasonably so,” returned the knight ; “where much is given, by them is much required. The young are too much engrossed by the pursuit of pleasure, to be susceptible of that devotional rapture which beauty, combined with talent, is fitted to inspire, which is at once its natural aliment and *its unquestionable due*. At mature age—forty—

forty-seven—the individual is able to appreciate himself, and to render his meed of homage to the divinity who must have Raphael for her worshipper; that is my third position, which I think, upon reflection, you cannot demur to. You will excuse me, my dear Lady Bloomsbury, I am a free speaker; but frankness, excessive frankness, perhaps, is my foible. I am going this morning to a picture auction. Splendid moonlight by Pether. Remember me kindly to all the ladies—to all—adieu.”

And with this gallant request, Sir Otto made a hasty, vacillating bow to Lady Bloomsbury, and retired in a flutter of spirits, for which her ladyship was quite at a loss to conceive any adequate provocation, unless, indeed—but the idea was almost too ridiculous, and so her ladyship dismissed it at once from her speculating mind, and directed her attention to those delicate transfers alluded to in her conversation with Sir Otto de Beauvoir, and to effect which required all the tender assiduity and diplomatic tact which respectively belong to a mama and a minister.

CHAPTER XII.

The spectral shape of my infirmity,
Pursues me still, and with its woman's scorn,
To sting my soul to madness and despair.

FALSE IMPRESSIONS.

THE *entrée* of his highness the Grand Duke of Schoffenspitzhoffel into N——, was heralded, not by a flourish of trumpets, but a flourish of goose-quills, which as effectually prepared the public mind for that cataract of honour, which ducal condescension was about to precipitate upon it, and lessened the shock, which otherwise might have been attended with injurious results. Through the triumphal arches, decorated with evergreens and gay banners, and bearing the inscription 'welcome' in cabbage-rose type, his highness—a fine, military-looking man, with a star on his braided blue frock, and his hat a little poised on one side—drove a curricule, drawn by two spirited bays, with silver mounted harness, and crimson satin rosettes at their heads. The corporation had been up all night, laboriously employed in the preparation of an eloquent address, which was read to his highness by the mayor, an old man, with a round head, very prominent ears, and carefully chained, who had scarcely stammered through two lines of it before he was in a profuse perspiration, and so remained till its conclusion, when the free-school boys, drawn up in

picturesque array under a temporary shed, closed their eyes, and shouted with spasmodic enthusiasm. Nor did the ladies (Heaven bless 'em! as Mr. Shuttleworth exclaimed, as he looked upon their blooming countenances with tearful rapture) neglect to wave their lace-bordered kerchiefs from the balconies, producing an effect which the Lady Mayoress, whose ostrich plumes defied contradiction, was understood to have no hesitation in pronouncing perfectly 'Venetian.'

To Mr. Thomas Inglewood's considerate gallantry, it will be remembered, the ladies of Shuttleworth Hall, accompanied by Captain Hipplesley and Lord Petersham, were indebted for a view of this magnificent spectacle, with which Laura expressed herself highly delighted. Mary, 'poor girl,' leaning on the arm of her noble cousin, seemed timid and sorrowful, so Tom thought it prudent not to ask her how she had enjoyed it. As for Helen and Captain Hipplesley, they were so deeply absorbed in confidential discourse, and had taken such an obscure position in the silversmith's first floor window, that it may be questioned whether they saw a single hair of the grand duke's moustachios, and still more doubtful is it, that they had any desire to criticise those remarkable appendages. However, Tom Inglewood had done a clever thing, and he knew it. He had sought and found the way to the heart of his idol, and so boundless was his joy, that but for the crowded state of the silversmith's balcony, there are strong reasons for believing that Tom would have snapped his fingers and danced (he was particularly fond of dancing at all times), on that identical spot, merely to relieve the exuberance of *his animal spirits*.

As it was acknowledged to be a charming day, Tom Inglewood, who, if he knew but little of 'Justinian's Pandects,' was thoroughly conversant with the laws of rural felicity, recommended the ladies to walk home across the nice soft meadows, and allow the carriage to go round the dusty road, and take them up at the third mile stone, which proposition was agreed to without one dissentient voice. In offering this suggestion, Tom had two politic schemes in view—first, to make the journey as prolix and as pleasant as possible, — and secondly, to enjoy a monopoly of Laura's conversation ; "For certainly," said Tom to himself, as Laura, full of vivacity and good humour, indulged that vein of innocent *badinage* which her mama had so frequent occasion to reprove, — "certainly," thought Tom, "she is the smartest as well as the handsomest girl in all creation ; and then what a musical laugh she has, and how her eyes sparkle ; and her arch glances, smiting you, as it were, on the bosom, seem to throw you off your balance altogether. I wonder whether she's fond of waltzing ? Horace says she's a coquette—perhaps she is. No matter ; only let me catch any fellow ogling her, and if he's as big as Daniel Lambert, by George, I'll thrash him !"

Such were the reflections which Tom's happy situation suggested to him, as Laura, pausing to look round for her sister Helen, who was walking with Captain Hippley at some distance behind, allowed Lord Petersham and Mary to get so far in advance, as to preclude the possibility of hearing any part of their conversation, if that could be called so, which consisted of a series of catechetical exercises upon family matters, respecting which

his lordship was at all times desirous to gain the most ample intelligence.

"How they do dawdle, to be sure," said Laura, supporting her fringed parasol with such graceful negligence, that Tom verily believed not even a mountain sylph, could have handled it more bewitchingly.

"Don't let's interrupt them," replied Mr. Inglewood, considerably; "they are talking of something serious, you may tell that by their manner."

"Captain Hipplesey," said Laura, "always looks serious; one would suppose he had a very great deal either upon his mind or his heart, poor single gentleman!"

"No doubt of it," said Tom, earnestly; "most people have when they're in ——" Tom stammered, blushed, and not knowing how to retreat from the awkward position into which his tender impetuosity had hurried him, endeavoured to hide his disgrace by directing Laura's attention to a couple of sprightly colts in an adjoining paddock, and warmly admiring their symmetry, concluded by wondering what their owner would take for them.

Laura looked at her ingenuous cavalier and smiled, as she crossed a crazy plank, which rendered passable a little dry ditch, with the aid of Tom's walking stick, one end of which he gallantly extended to her from the opposite side of the fosse.

"Are you much in the habit of riding, Mr. Inglewood?" inquired Laura, when Tom, in the idiomatic phraseology of a coach guard, had congratulated her on her safe arrival.

"Rather," replied Tom, facetiously. "I've got

a hunter at home that I've been offered eighty guineas for, and wouldn't take it. She is a reg'lar span—that is, she stands fifteen hands high; but her action is most magnificent. I rode her in a steeple-chase last October, and should have won, if it hadn't been ——”

“ Ah! poor little ‘if,’ as usual, is to blame for everything,” said Laura, sighing. “ If it hadn't been for the fear of ——”

“ Fear!” cried Tom, heroically; “ there was no fear about me.”

“ No fear,” returned Laura; “ then, of course, there is no love, for one can scarcely exist without the other—it is the love of reward and the fear of punishment that make us the sweet little people we are; and if you have neither love nor fear, Mr. Inglewood, what pledges will you give us for your good behaviour?”

Tom felt that this was a capital opportunity to speak out. Love and pledges were excellent texts to expatiate upon, and so Tom resolved, in his own vernacular, to ‘ Go in for the ten thousand guinea stakes,’ and prepared to clear the course accordingly.

“ When I talked of having no fear,” observed Mr. Inglewood, “ I meant, of course, ——”

“ Like all your vain and fickle sex—nothing,” added Laura; “ but, as you are so distinguished an equestrian, Mr. Inglewood, pray did you ever ride across the country on an Arab steed, without either saddle or bridle?—I once saw a gentleman perform that feat.”

Tom looked at Laura, and shook his head with an air of sagacious scepticism.

“ That's coming it rather too—powerful,” said *the solicitor*, hitting the correct word by a miracle.

"If you don't believe me, ask Helen; she was present in the same box."

"Box!" said Mr. Inglewood, musingly; "what box?—not a hunting-box?"

Laura laughed, and Tom pondered deeply; at length a sudden flash of intelligence dispelled the Cimmerian gloom which enveloped his apprehensive faculties, as, flourishing his cane triumphantly, he exclaimed—"I have it! you mean Lord Byron's 'Mazeppa,' at the royal amphitheatre, last season. I knew it couldn't be done across such a country as this."

Tom ceased speaking, but observed to himself—"By Goleys! if I had as keen an edge as she has, if I wouldn't go in for the attorney-general's plate, neck or nothing. She'll be mighty useful in the way of business, when she comes to be Mrs. I.—Only give her her head, and she'll beat Charlotte by a length, and not distress herself either. My stars! what a nipper to give instructions to counsel for a swinging brief. I wish most awfully that they'd put her name on the roll instead of mine—she'd soon lead the band in 6/8 time; though, as Mrs. M'Rowdy's unpaid costs will certify, I'll be dash'd if I can do it."

The pleasure which Laura derived from Mr. Inglewood's sprightly conversation, was not participated in by her cousin Mary. She, poor girl, delivered over to the tender mercies of a noble lord, had not been so severely catechised since she was a child, his lordship's insatiable thirst for information scarcely allowing her a moment's repose, till, having furnished him with a biographical memoir of every branch of the Shuttleworth family, not to mention a *catalogue raisonnée* of all their numerous friends

and connexions, and a particular account of the neighbouring gentry, with such necessary items annexed thereto, as a property-tax collector might require, Mary's state of mental exhaustion at length became so oppressive that she could almost have cried. More than once she cast a furtive and anxious glance around, but Helen and Laura were both too far distant to answer her mute appeals for succour. Occasionally a wicked, woman-like thought would flash across her mind, inciting her to turn upon her inexorable catechist, and see if she could not weaken *him*, by the loss of a little information as to the circumstances of his early life, commencing with his childhood, and proceeding chronologically downwards. Whether Mary could ever have acquired sufficient firmness, to carry out this plan of retribution is more than doubtful. She had no vain-glorious desire to perform the Amazon, and very little natural capacity for it; and her gratification, therefore, need not be much insisted upon, when she was released from her sufferings without having occasion to point the fatal lance of interrogation at her adversary.

Raising her desponding eyes, as she and Lord Petersham approached a stile that separated two contiguous meadows, Mary perceived a figure, clad in a pilot coat and navy cap, and which, despite of its rude habiliments, Mary considered rather graceful than otherwise. Startled by the sound of voices behind him, the unknown, who, leaning with folded arms upon the stile, was absorbed in contemplation, suddenly turned round; while Mary, with feelings of rapture and incredulity so strangely blended, it is difficult to say which predominated, pointed at *the stranger*, who, smiling, now approached her, and

strove, but ineffectually, to articulate the name of 'Walter Brandon!'

A few words from Walter sufficed to break the spell which held captive Mary's senses, and to account for his appearance in this singular disguise. The vessel which conveyed him from Plymouth having, shortly after sailing, encountered a terrific gale, was dashed to pieces on a reef near the coast of Cornwall, and all on board perished excepting Walter, a Malay, and a cabin boy, who succeeded in reaching a rocky promontory, where, overcome with exhaustion, they were stripped by a gang of wreckers before daylight, and would probably have been washed away by the advancing surf, but for the timely interposition of some brave fellows belonging to the coast-guard, who, after a desperate conflict with the marauders, in which one of them was shot dead, conducted Walter and his companions to a place of shelter, and kindly furnished our hero with those nautical equipments, which so well became his frank and manly bearing.

Mary's attention had been so completely occupied in listening to Walter's absorbing narrative, that she did not observe her cousin Lord Petersham, who withdrew immediately on her being addressed by his unexpected rival. His disappearance, however, as may be supposed, did not occasion Mary much profound regret, and she was about to accompany Walter on his way to Shuttleworth Hall, when this blissful design was cruelly frustrated by Sir Otto de Beauvoir, who was seen approaching with a gay and jaunty step, his Malacca cane suspended by its gorgeous tassel on the tip of his little finger, and his channelled visage redolent of self-complacency and rouge. Feeling no desire to be over-

whelmed with the congratulations of this 'silly old twaddler,' as Walter called him, and trusting that, satisfied with Mary's assurance of being under Lord Petersham's protection, he would be kind enough to waive his 'right of escort,' Walter retired a few paces, and, throwing himself listlessly on the grass, with his hand shading his eyes, pretended to be seriously admiring the wooden spire of the village church, which was embosomed in a cluster of trees, very much below the level of his feet.

"Miss Shuttleworth—and alone!" cried the knight, with grateful surprise. "Is there any just cause or impediment why we should not be joined together in the bonds of social ambulation—saving always this little rustic obstacle." And he tapped the stile playfully with his cane of Malacca.

"I thank you, Sir Otto," replied Mary; "but my cousin, Lord Petersham, is with me. He is only stopping to speak to Laura and Mr. Inglewood."

"And a very excellent *compagnon de voyage*, no doubt, my Lord Petersham proves himself. Will you allow me?" And Sir Otto extended his forefinger with the studied grace of a master of ceremonies.

It was a stile of three bars, and had originally consisted of four, but one had been broken away. It had no landing-place on either side; and despite of all anticipated perils, Mary could not help smiling at the inadequate support so elegantly tendered her by Sir Otto de Beauvoir, who, perceiving the difficulties that surrounded his gallant undertaking, was somewhat perplexed what course to pursue, till his eye happened fortunately to alight upon the supposed naval lieutenant, whom he immediately determined to enlist in his service.

"Young man," he said, after giving two or three

taps with the cane to arrest his attention, "will you do me the favour to aid me in assisting this young lady over the stile?—thank you."

Walter rose, and politely lent Mary his hand; while Sir Otto contributed his forefinger, and an amount of nervous agitation, which was considerably augmented when, hearing some unearthly sounds behind him, he suddenly started round, and beheld, to his unspeakable embarrassment, a large black cow walking towards him very deliberately, with its head slightly lowered, and its eye glaring as if on sanguinary thoughts intent. There was no time to waste in idle ceremony; and grasping the hands both of Walter and Mary with death-like tenacity, Sir Otto attempted to leap over the rustic obstacle; but failing in this endeavour, and finding that his pursuer was almost within reach of him, he relinquished his hold, and made a sudden dive through the two widest bars of the stile, struggling vigorously, like a conger-eel, to wriggle his passage through; while his designing enemy, having reached the barrier, made several vigorous essays to accelerate his progress by butting at his upturned soles, greatly to Sir Otto's exasperation and personal discomfiture. How these dangerous experiments would have terminated it is difficult to decide. Mary was too much terrified, and Walter too much convulsed with ill-suppressed laughter, to afford that power of traction for which Sir Otto so loudly implored, to save him from his brutal and cowardly assailant. Fortunately his cries were heard by Tom Inglewood and Captain Hipposley, who, hastily repairing to the scene of this tragical episode, by their united efforts the distressed knight was speedily released from vaccine persecution; but not without forfeiting

the almost entire bloom from one of his cheeks, and smearing his artificial eyebrows in a manner so hideous and frightful, that Laura and Helen for some moments could scarcely recognise him, and were almost thrown into a fit of hysterical risibility when they did so.

While Captain Hipplesey and Tom Inglewood were helping the knight of the rouge-ful countenance to repair his toilet, Walter took his departure, unnoticed by any one but Mary, with whom he exchanged signals no less easy to be expressed than understood. On reaching the Hall, whither, of course, Sir Otto accompanied them, Helen and Laura were forthwith secretly apprised by Lady Bloomsbury of the melancholy fact of old Lord Kew's marriage. Helen received the intelligence with admirable fortitude, and silently acceded to Lady Bloomsbury's suggestions for the guidance of her future behaviour towards the deteriorated Captain Hipplesey. The paper containing the announcement of that sad calamity—we are speaking in reference to Lord Kew—Lady Bloomsbury had purposely left on the table in the drawing-room, in order that Captain Hipplesey might see it was futile for him to attempt any longer to conceal his social degradation. The effect upon poor Horace was truly affecting. No sooner did his eye glance upon the fatal column, than a sort of internal spasm seized upon him: he became alternately pale and flushed, and rising from his seat, abruptly quitted the ladies' presence. When he had gone, Lady Bloomsbury looked volumes at Helen, who answered with one of those dramatic glances which had excited so much high-toned admiration in her performance of *Camille* at Talma Castle.

An hour elapsed, and Captain Hipplesley did not return. Tom Inglewood, who had been sitting with Laura on a flower-stand in the conservatory, engaged in the arduous mental exercise of solving charades and conundrums, or at least attempting so to do, was not aware of Hipplesley's absence till the approaching shades of evening compelled Tom and his adored to rejoin the social circle. Tom had spent a delightful day; everything had turned out as prosperously as his heart could desire; but now came the mysterious disappearance of his friend Horace to embitter the cup from which he had imbibed such delicious nectar. As night advanced, Tom became more and more uneasy, and intimating to Laura that he was afraid Horace had been taken ill, Tom started off towards the neighbouring town to ascertain if Hipplesley had returned to his hotel. On entering the coffee-room, he found that his anticipations were correct. Horace was sitting in a corner, smoking a cigar, with a countenance so woe-begone, that it almost made Tom's heart ache to see him.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" said the solicitor, as Horace, in silence, returned his friendly and sympathizing squeeze of the hand.

"My fate is sealed, Tom," replied Horace, flippingly the ashes of his cigar with a sigh; "for me Love's sun hath set for ever."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Mr Inglewood, encouragingly; "never pull up, my boy, while there's a chance of winning — what have you got to drink?"

"Sherry and water," replied Horace, with an expression of deep temperance.

"Syrup for spinsters," said Tom, and whistling,

he rang the bell, and ordered a bottle of Guinness's stout.

"What reason have you to be so down?—the odds now are ten to one in your favour," said Tom, as, having lit his cheroot, he sat down to expostulate calmly with his hypochondriacal companion.

"It's entirely attributable to this unfortunate deformity," observed Horace, pointing with his cigar at his sinister foot.

Tom emitted a volume of smoke, from whence there presently issued an articulate sound, strongly suggestive of that commodity which has been so long in extensive use called 'Stuff.'

"I'm not jesting, Inglewood," said Horace. "As I've told you repeatedly, Helen, with her fine imagination, cannot endure deformity in any shape. It's very natural. I can't blame her. I can't, indeed."

"You can't, eh!" cried Tom; "well, you're of a more forgiving disposition than I should be, if she gave me the go-by simply because I happened to be troubled with a large corn."

"That's a different thing, Tom," replied Horace; "natural malformations are incurable."

"But how do you know she is aware of it?"

"Did you not observe," said Horace, "a newspaper on the table this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"And did you not also notice what a peculiar look Helen gave me?"

"No, I didn't observe it; but what should she give you such a peculiar look for?"

"Guess," replied Horace; "there's the object which reminded her of my presumption in aspiring to a union with one who is as near perfection, *perhaps, as anything mortal can be.*"

So saying, Horace handed to his friend a newspaper, and pointed to a woodcut in one of its columns, representing a cat astonished at perceiving its curved figure reflected in a highly polished Wellington boot. It was an illustration to some lyrical verses in praise of blacking.

Tom having carefully inspected the engraving, and read the verses annexed, shook his head sceptically.

"I don't think it's that," said Tom, "which causes so much difficulty in putting the harness on."

Horace, evidently pained at this inelegant metaphor, desired his friend to explain.

"Well, I hardly know whether I ought to tell you," said Mr. Inglewood, "because it was whispered to me confidentially. However, of course, you won't let it go any further?"

"Honour!" said Hippesley, placing his hand on his heart.

"You remember Sir Otto de Beauvoir being so attentive to Helen with that pottle of strawberries, on the race-course?"

"I do."

"There's something in it,—more than meets the eye," rejoined Tom, looking mysteriously over the edge of his tumbler, "Laura fancies—mind this is a secret—that the old beaver is trying to cut you out."

"That's very odd," said Horace, coolly; "for Helen told me that he was decidedly attached to her sister Laura, and had even gone so far as to speak to Lady Bloomsbury on the subject."

Tom started up, his cheeks flushed, and his eyes flashing, as if he had received a challenge, and *rubbing his hands briskly together*, exclaimed, "By

Goleys ! if I catch him winking at her, I'll thrash him most sweetly."

Whether it was a mere accidental coincidence, or resulted from the operation of those occult laws, which provide for the instantaneous appearance of parties, whose merits are under discussion, certain it is, that while Mr. Inglewood was making his conditional proclamation of war, a gentleman on horseback was observed to pass the window and pull up at the hotel-door, whom Tom, with great excitement, announced to be Sir Otto de Beauvoir, in his own extremely proper person.

"Waiter," cried Tom, after waiting some short time, expecting that Sir Otto would make his appearance ; "Tell the gentleman who has gone up stairs, that Mr. Inglewood wishes to speak half a dozen words with him."

In a few minutes the waiter returned, and informed Mr. Inglewood that the gentleman who had gone up stairs had 'retired to his chamber,'—in other and less polished language, he had gone to bed.

"No matter," said the solicitor, balancing himself with courageous *nonchalance* on the hind legs of his chair, "I'll tackle him to-morrow morning before breakfast, and have this affair cleared up either in this room or in the field opposite. I don't care which—it's quite immaterial to me."

Hippesley tried to dissuade his legal friend from this pugnacious resolution ; but finding remonstrances only served to invigorate it, he wisely abandoned the attempt, called for his candle, bade Tom a melancholy good-night, and proceeded to his apartment. In passing up stairs, however, he perceived in one of the chambers, of which the

door was open, several persons collected round a bed, on which lay a young man, divested of his coat and waistcoat, and the sleeve of his shirt stained with blood, in a state of apparent insensibility. On inquiry, Hippesley ascertained that this unfortunate person had been shot, it was supposed, by a robber; having been found by some labouring men in the neighbouring forest, bleeding from the wound, which proved to be of a less serious character than, from his appearance when discovered, might have been expected. Two surgeons were in attendance, one of whom was bathing his forehead with water, while near the head of the bed, his arms folded, and silently watching the ghastly lineaments of his helpless rival, stood Lord Peter-sham, whose presence at this scene, and the tragical circumstances thereto conducing, will be fully explained in the following chapter.



CHAPTER XIII.

In that lone wood-path, where the green snake glides,
Hate, with demoniac visage, looketh on
Its prostrate victim, while the trenchant blade,
Suspended, trembles mirror'd in his blood.

THE SECRET FOR.

THE route which Staunton took after his separation from Mary Shuttleworth, was along a solitary bridle-path, over a hill leading down to the river, whose sparkling surface was occasionally visible through the copse, which extended for some dis-

tance on one side of the declivity, where countless representations of horse-shoes, in bas-relief, presented a most fantastic and hieroglyphical appearance. Concealing himself behind the bank on the opposite side of the lane, Staunton had a perfect view of his victim, whose progress he watched with a felon-like countenance, as Walter, taking advantage of the confusion caused by Sir Otto de Beauvoir's disaster, proceeded with rapid strides across the meadow, about two hundred yards distant, from where Staunton remained in ambush. Cautiously screening himself from observation, Staunton followed his rival, till he perceived him halting on the high and narrow-arched wooden bridge, on the opposite side of which extended the forest through which, by a circuitous foot-path, those who preferred sylvan solitude to the dusty frolics of turnpike roads, might reach the neighbouring freestone-built town of Market-Harborough.

It was one of those mild and mellow autumnal afternoons, when a dreamy spirit of tranquillity seems to pervade inanimate creation; when sky and stream maintain a silent, loving correspondence; when golden uplands teem with bending grain; when plums hang heavy on old manorial walls, and red and purple berries infest the prickly hedge-rows, and universal nature, like a fond mother, looks on her garnered offspring, with an eye of benign and placid contemplation. Though unfitted by habit and constitution, to appreciate either sensible or moral beauty, though the leprous aspect of metropolitan communities was more familiar, and perhaps more inviting, to his jaundiced vision than the child-like innocence of rural scenery; yet even he, with *that* resolute, dark, and subtle mind, could not help


surveying with interest the calm and sunny landscape spread around him. Midway between the hillock where he stood and the misty horizon, children, bare-footed and embrowned by the fervid sun, were gleaning in a newly-shaven rye-field, and their rude, gleeful voices, as they carried the straggling sheaves on their elfish heads, rang through the soft, balmy atmosphere, drowning, momentarily, those mellifluous combinations, which were lavishly poured forth by certain feathered songsters in an adjacent clump of pine-trees.

The level beams of the declining sun sparkled on the broad river like a shower of diamonds, and shed a dazzling lustre on the windows of the fishermen's huts on the opposite shore, where, along with sundry shallops and fishing-boats, a coasting vessel lay moored, which a little man in canvass trousers, sitting on a plank suspended between two ropes, was quietly occupied in painting with a bright coat of green, while some of his mates, with sacks over their heads like monks, were more actively employed in carrying baskets of sand-ballast. In one of the gardens, which stretched from the cottages down to the water side, from which they were separated by a low railing, a stout mariner, in striped shirt-sleeves and a straw hat, might be seen smoking a long pipe, while he contemplated, with warrantable pride, the flourishing condition of his ranunculuses and rhododendrons. Before another parterre, a venerable dame was darning stockings at her own door, and apparently holding a desultory conversation with her next-garden neighbour, an old spectacled man in a Welsh wig, who was filing a saw with all necessary perseverance and precision. Behind the fishers' huts rose a mass of umbrageous

foliage, forming the skirts of the forest which Walter was about to penetrate, followed by his insidious foe.

During the time that Staunton was surveying the prospect above described, Walter Brandon had remained leaning thoughtfully, over the barrier of the high and narrow-arched wooden bridge. As soon, however, as he began to resume his progress, Staunton hailed a boat from the ferry, still, however, keeping his meditated victim in view, whose path, lying in the direction Staunton was taking, the latter would have ample time to intercept him, notwithstanding his rapid movements, and the advantage in point of distance which he had already obtained.

About half an hour had elapsed from the time of Staunton's leaving the ferry-house, when Mr. Shuttleworth, returning homewards through the forest, was alarmed by the report of fire-arms. He paused, and looking in the direction from whence the report came, observed his nephew, Lord Petersham, proceeding along a path which intersected that which he himself was traversing, and at such a rapid pace, that before Mr. Shuttleworth could reach the turning of the thicket, he was nearly out of sight. On calling to him, however, Staunton turned round, and recognising Mr. Shuttleworth, immediately retraced his steps, and in reply to his uncle's observation upon his walking so fast, he stated that, having just met some suspicious characters on the road, he was afraid of being robbed, and had accordingly pressed on quicker than he should have done, but for labouring under that apprehension. Mr. Shuttleworth then mentioned to him the fact of his having heard what he thought must have been the



report, not of a fowlingpiece, but a pistol; to which Staunton observed, that he had seen some young men practising with pistols in a meadow at the outskirts of the forest, which explanation appearing satisfactory, Mr. Shuttleworth was about to dismiss the subject from his mind, when an old decrepit man, with a stick and a small beer-barrel slung over his shoulder, came up, and respectfully addressing himself to Mr. Shuttleworth, stated that, at the foot of the hill-path he had seen a spaniel dog whose feet were dabbled with blood, and advised Mr. Shuttleworth to accompany him to the spot, for he was afraid that something serious had happened. Staunton sneered at this proposition, and told the old man he was dreaming; the idea of a dog's feet 'dabbled with blood,' was too ridiculous for any sober person's consideration, and in compliance with Staunton's suggestion of leaving the visionary and his phantom dog together, Mr. Shuttleworth was about to proceed on his way, when his curiosity derived a new and powerful stimulus from the approach of the canine witness in question, which proved to be Mary Shuttleworth's favourite spaniel, and whose appearance, corresponding with the old man's description, demanded an immediate inquiry into its mysterious origin.

Acting upon the impulse thus communicated to him, Mr. Shuttleworth, accompanied by Staunton and the old man, tracked the course which the dog had followed till they reached the bottom of the narrow slope, where, beside a rivulet, partly hidden by brambles, they discovered a young man lying on his face in a state of complete insensibility. The shallow stream, which laved his auburn locks, was crimsoned with the blood which still flowed from a

wound, whose position shewed it to have been inflicted by some dastardly assassin; while the signet-ring still remaining on his victim's person, left, little doubt that the motive impelling to this fearful crime was one not of plunder, but revenge.

As Mr. Shuttleworth bent down to staunch the hemorrhage, he started with emotions of anguish and horror, on recognising in the lifeless form before him, all that remained of what was once the lover of his daughter Mary,—the unfortunate Walter Brandon.

"Who could have done this?" he said, as Staunton shewed him a pistol which he had just picked up, and which, he suggested, had been the instrument of self-destruction.

Mr. Shuttleworth covered his eyes with his hand, as if a pang of remorse had suddenly seized him, occasioned by reflecting, that his guilty ambition had been instrumental in urging the young man to this terrible act of desperation.

"You seem affected, my dear sir," said Staunton. "Let me advise you to retire, and take the dog with you—here are some people approaching who will afford me all necessary assistance in this matter; besides, your presence here may excite suspicion. Go, let me beg of you: I will follow almost immediately."

When Mr. Shuttleworth, having complied with Staunton's entreaty, reached the summit of the hill, he looked back, and saw that some labouring men were carrying away the body of Walter Brandon on a hastily-formed litter of boughs. Staunton stood and watched them for a few minutes, and then struck into a cross path, which conducted by a circuitous route to the town, whither the men were

proceeding with their melancholy burthen. While Mr. Shuttleworth was meditating on this subject, his attention was attracted by a voice above him; and looking up, he perceived a figure in military uniform, climbing a lofty chestnut-tree in search of birds' nests. The circumstance made but little impression on Mr. Shuttleworth at the moment; but is deserving of record, from its connection with results of an important nature, which are reserved for development hereafter.

It is difficult to describe the feelings which Mr. Shuttleworth experienced on this occasion—they were so mixed and indefinite in their complexion and character. His first emotions of horror and commiseration had been modified, if not subdued, by the subsequent reflection, that Walter's death, however deplorable in itself, removed one important obstacle in the way of Mr. Shuttleworth's ambition; and while it facilitated the alliance of Lord Petersham with his daughter, gave additional security to their union. Even so the torrent, which carries devastation with it through the valley, may bear upon its bosom those bright flowers which many a peasant maiden would gladly gather for her bridal-wreath. Yet here again the sense of relief was tempered with certain painful, but vague misgivings. The strange coincidence of Walter Brandon and Lord Petersham meeting at a spot whose profound seclusion presented such facilities for the exercise of those vindictive emotions which the rivalry subsisting between them was so strongly calculated to provoke—Staunton's denial of having heard the report of fire-arms, which had so forcibly arrested Mr. Shuttleworth's attention, coupled with his anxiety for the latter's withdrawal, 'as his presence might

excite suspicion'—these were circumstances which excited in Mr. Shuttleworth's mind the most distressing apprehensions; and for a moment clouded those splendid visions of his daughter's exaltation, which he had so long in secret nourished, and which, but for this lamentable occurrence, might have met with their immediate realization. On the other hand, he felt it difficult—impossible—to believe that one in Lord Petersham's position, would jeopardize life and reputation to destroy a rival, whose pretensions he could so easily afford to despise; or that, to secure the hand of a girl who, like Mary Shuttleworth, was not distinguished by any remarkable personal endowments, he would voluntarily imbue his hands in innocent blood, and challenge the ignominious doom of an assassin.

So preposterous did his first crude suspicions appear, when regarded in this light, that Mr. Shuttleworth felt, indeed, that he had acted unjustly towards his nephew, in entertaining them for a single moment, and determined to banish all ungenerous thoughts at once and for ever from his imagination. This resolution, however, was more easily formed than executed, and in spite of himself, and his severe mental expostulations, the presumption of Staunton's blood-guiltiness would intrude upon his mind, and caused him to shudder as he thought of the daughter whom he so fondly loved, that he would almost sacrifice his life to promote her happiness and honour.

Vacillating between the promptings of ambition, and the affectionate solicitude of his parental nature, Mr. Shuttleworth reached home, and waited with impatience for his nephew's arrival. Ten o'clock came, however, but Staunton did not make

his appearance. Mr. Shuttleworth, silent and abstracted, was sitting at supper, with Lady Bloomsbury, Helen, Laura, and Mary, when the butler entered, and informed his master that he was wanted; and on proceeding to the library, where he understood a gentleman was waiting to see him, he found, to his surprise, Lord Petersham alone.

Staunton was standing, with his hat on, by the mantel-piece, his arms folded, and his eyes bent on the ground. His sallow features were partially illuminated by the Argand lamp before him, but the contrast rather tended to heighten than detract from the effect, commonly produced by their predominant expression, of a vigilance that never slumbered, and a resolution that nothing could subdue.

"You are late," said Mr. Shuttleworth, addressing him with hesitation. "I expected you long ago."

"And what ground, sir, had you for your expectations?" demanded Staunton, with a sternness almost approaching to ferocity. "Am I one of your menials, sir, that you can command at all times, and in all places, to do your bidding, and consult your wishes? I tell you, sir, I am not accustomed to this kind of vassalage, it neither assimilates with my tastes nor habits; and as you seem, sir, to regard me in no other light than as a passive agent, whom you can turn to your account or cast off at pleasure, I would give you to understand that you have committed a fatal error in the selection of your man."

"Lord Petersham, you astonish me!" cried Mr. Shuttleworth; "I really do not, cannot imagine what provocation I have given you for assuming this extraordinary tone."

"Indeed, sir!" replied Staunton; "then it may be necessary that I should tell you that when I entered your house, and accepted of your hospitality, I did not anticipate that my pretensions to the hand of Miss Shuttleworth, would involve me in an honourable contest with one of your favoured servants—a contest, sir, which, if not undertaken with your express sanction, you have at least connived at from its commencement."

"Never," returned Mr. Shuttleworth, warmly—"never."

"It's false!" exclaimed Staunton, striking the table with his clenched hand—"false as hell, and you know it."

Mr. Shuttleworth's countenance flushed for an instant with shame and resentment, but controlling his feelings by a powerful effort, he said, calmly, "You allude to Walter Brandon. I believe that he and my daughter had some slight regard for each other, and I took all possible means and precautions to dissolve their connection. I accordingly sent him abroad, from whence, but for an unforeseen accident—his having been shipwrecked—he would, in all probability, never have returned. What more could I do? But it is quite unnecessary to have any further argument in reference to that person's pretensions, since he ——"

"Lives," said Staunton, walking away with an air of indifference.

Mr. Shuttleworth echoed the word mechanically.

"Lives!" he exclaimed, and paused, as if excessive amazement had paralyzed his powers of utterance.

"You seem alarmed," said Staunton, suddenly turning round, and fixing his dark glittering eyes

upon his interlocutor. "Doubtless you prayed for a happy deliverance; but your prayer, you see, is slighted. I beg you'll give yourself no further anxiety on my account; and that my presence may no longer prevent Miss Shuttleworth from exercising those elective privileges, which you seem willing that she should enjoy, even though your honour should suffer by the promotion of your footman to the rank of a son-in-law, and in order that yourself and daughter may become marks for the ridicule and contempt of the world—objects to be sneered at or smiled at, but by all means shunned—I beg, sir, to bid you respectfully farewell." And with these words, Staunton was about to take his leave, but Mr. Shuttleworth prevented him.

"You mistake, my dear Lord Petersham—you do, indeed," he said, with trembling earnestness; "my daughter, no less than myself, entertains the warmest esteem, the profoundest respect, for your lordship."

"What authority have you for that assertion?" demanded Staunton.

"Her own acknowledgment. Wait but a minute, and you shall hear it from her own lips."

"No, sir—no," replied Staunton, interrupting Mr. Shuttleworth, who was about to retire for the apparent purpose of arranging an interview between Mary and his nephew. "If you think proper to speak privately to Miss Shuttleworth, and ascertain what really are her sentiments, 'tis well. I will wait your final decision without. Five minutes will be sufficient, I presume, to enable the lady to make her election."

As soon as Staunton had withdrawn, Mr. Shuttleworth sent for Mary into the library. She came

immediately. Mr. Shuttleworth desired her to sit down.

"Mary," he said, as he took a chair beside her; "I wish to speak to you very seriously."

Mary's cheek grew pale—she thought of Walter Brandon and their recent meeting, and trembled at her father's anticipated censure.

"Your happiness, Mary," pursued Mr. Shuttleworth, "is as precious to me, or more so, than my own; and, to secure it, there is no sacrifice I would hesitate to make, which a child from its only parent could reasonably desire—you know that, Mary?"

"I am quite happy, my dear papa," said Mary, with a countenance whose marked anxiety strangely contradicted her declaration.

"Life, you know, Mary, is uncertain," resumed Mr. Shuttleworth; "none of our family have been long-lived, and, if anything *should* happen to me"——

"My dear papa!" cried Mary; and the tears started to her eyes as she looked at her parent with vivid tenderness and alarm.

"It is therefore my duty," he continued, "no less than the fondest desire of my heart, to see you comfortably and honourably settled, before such an event happens. Mary, I regret exceedingly, for your own sake, that you should ever have at all encouraged the attentions of young Walter Brandon. I regret it deeply, but I am sure that it is not too late now to efface from your mind entirely the remembrance of that person, and to set your affections upon nobler and worthier objects—you understand what I mean?"

"I have endeavoured to do so, papa, but"—the poor girl paused, covered her face with her hand-

kerchief, and added, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by sobs—"I cannot do it."

"Time and occupation, my dear child, will effect a cure, rely upon it," returned Mr. Shuttleworth, dallying with his snuff-box. "I will give orders, my love, for him to keep away from the house altogether—it is for your good that I do this violence to my feelings, and I trust that you will assist me in carrying out the arrangements I have made for that purpose. I would now speak a few words with you respecting your cousin, Lord Petersham."

Mary pressed her handkerchief closer to her face, and a visible tremor agitated her shrinking form.

Mr. Shuttleworth took his daughter's hand, and said, in a soft and soothing tone—"Mary! he loves you; tell me, will you prove yourself worthy of that honour—of his flattering preference, more properly speaking?"

There was no answer to this question, but a gentle flow of tears, and an occasional convulsive sob.

"Mary," said Mr. Shuttleworth, with deep emotion; "if you have any regard for my happiness; if you would not break my heart, and see my gray hairs descend with sorrow to the tomb, say that you will become the honoured bride of your noble cousin, who offers, in return for your affection, to lay his title, his riches, everything that he possesses at your feet; and how can you refuse him, when he is willing to raise you to the lofty eminence which he himself occupies, and make you the sharer of his honours—the admired, the envied Countess of Petersham?"

"Why—why, papa, would you wish me to be envied?" said Mary, with tender earnestness;

"with those I love, oh, I could live in the humblest cottage, and never be unhappy—indeed—indeed, I could."

Mr. Shuttleworth hesitated, as if perplexed by this appeal; and then assuming a still more solemn and impressive air, he said—"I will not attempt to conceal from you what perhaps it would have been wiser in me to have taught you at an earlier age, that the cherished object of my life, is to see my daughter respected by the world—let me but indulge the innocent dream of her becoming the equal of peeresses, the pride and ornament of a court, and I shall die happy, Mary, if I die the moment after the coronet is placed upon your brow. To afford your poor old father so much joy, you cannot—I'm sure you cannot—refuse to bestow upon your noble kinsman, Lord Petersham, what he assures me that he prizes above all earthly treasures, your heart and your hand."

"If it be your wish, papa,"—the poor girl could say no more, her head drooped on her father's shoulder, and she wept as if her little heart was breaking, in the struggle to tear itself away from the remembrance of her first and only love.

"Cheer up!—cheer up!" said Mr. Shuttleworth, imprinting a kiss on her forehead; "I'll go and summon your cousin—he will be delighted, enraptured, at the joyful tidings;" and, having wiped Mary's tears from her pale cheek, he hastily went in search of Lord Petersham, who was walking in the principal avenue of the park, whom he requested to accompany him, and learn from Mary's lips the acknowledgment of her affection; but this invitation Staunton declined, expressing himself perfectly satisfied with Mr. Shuttleworth's assurances, and

pleaded as his apology for declining a personal interview, certain engagements elsewhere, which could not be postponed another minute, without subjecting him to serious inconvenience and expense.

When Mr. Shuttleworth returned to the library, he found his daughter lying on the floor, cold and insensible. Raising her in his arms, he summoned the domestics, who, with Lady Bloomsbury and Laura, speedily came to his assistance, and by whom the usual means of restoration in such cases were promptly supplied, but without any satisfactory result.

"Mary!—Mary! my child!" cried the agonized father, as he chafed his daughter's hands, and fixed his eager eyes upon the blue-veined lids by which her own were veiled from his sight; "look at me—speak to me—but a word—but one word to say that you forgive me." He paused; a cold perspiration bedewed his forehead, as, releasing his hold, in a tone so full of horror and remorse, that all present seemed awe-struck, he exclaimed,—“Just Heaven! I have killed her—she is dead!”

And, sinking on his knees, with his gray head bowed down, and his trembling hands clasped together, the old man prayed, in the burning agony of his conscience-stricken soul, to be forgiven for the murder of his child.

CHAPTER XIV.

The joy on which with raptur'd gaze we turn,
As, high in heaven, serene it seems to burn
Like a false meteor, sudden shoots to earth,
Extinct with all the dreams that gave it birth.

ROSALIE.

THE agonized feelings of a parent, under circumstances similar to those described in our last chapter, might naturally engender the apprehension which gave such terrible poignancy to paternal remorse. But although the blow was not so fatal as its penitent author announced and believed, yet many hours elapsed before Mary was fully restored to consciousness, and even then a succession of fainting fits required incessant attention, and enlisted the warmest sympathies not only of her kindred, but of the humblest member of the household, to whom she had long been endeared by her placid, kind, and affable disposition.

Though the predominant quality in Mr. Shuttleworth's mental constitution, as we have already shown, was that almost pardonable weakness which sought the reflection of his own pride in his daughter's greatness, yet those less conventional feelings, which are independent of time, climate, and condition, had strength enough to maintain a severe struggle with the chimeras of his aspiring imagination. Though a Countess was inestimably precious

in his sight, his child engrossed a still larger portion of his affections; and to have restored bloom to her faded cheek, and lustre to her eyes, he felt as if he could willingly have retracted almost every word that he had spoken in Lord Petersham's recommendation. Nevertheless, the position in which he stood, with reference to that illustrious personage, caused Mr. Shuttleworth the most distressing hesitation. He had already promised his daughter's hand—he could not overlook that fatal error,—and how could he violate an engagement, deliberately and spontaneously entered into, without exposing himself to the most contemptuous reproaches. The longer Mr. Shuttleworth reflected upon this question, the more insupportable became his embarrassment, and he was about to seek that very common and competent resource in such emergencies—the advice of his solicitor, when he was extricated from all his perplexities, in a manner more agreeable than any counsel, however learned, could have devised, or any soothsayer, however sagacious, have anticipated.

Mr. Brandon and his friend, Counsellor Pluckey's departure from town, had been delayed by a variety of causes, which we need not at present pause to particularize, but which, being unknown either to Mr. Shuttleworth or his noble nephew, were productive of much uneasiness to both of them. In this unpleasant aspect of affairs, Staunton announced his intention of going up to town, and communicating personally with Mr. Brandon; and it was on the morning selected for that purpose that Lady Bloomsbury, who was sitting at needle-work alone in the breakfast parlour, was informed by Samuel, the footman, that two gentlemen 'from London' wished

to see his master, who was walking in the park along with Lord Petersham. Under these circumstances, and not wishing to be interrupted in her charitable labours, Lady Bloomsbury desired Sam to place the folding japan screen before the little pink satin work-table, at which she was sitting, with sundry yards of eleemosynary calico around her, and then to request the gentlemen to walk in, while he went in search of his master. The first part of these instructions Sam accomplished with unusual dexterity, only letting the screen fall twice in its transit from the fire-place to the bay-window, and treading but once on the tail of Lady Bloomsbury's slumbering tabby, by whom the accidental indignity, however, was resented with an explosive virulence that caused Sam, like a modest footman, to blush with such emphasis, that, but for his white cravat, it would have been difficult to draw the line of demarcation between his face and his waist-coat.

Mr. Pluckey, who wore a boat-shaped hat called the 'regent,' with a broad ribbon, entered the parlour, covered, as if to distinguish himself from his client, whose unqualified reverence for all established formularies prevented him from committing such a capital violation of conventional propriety.

"With safety," whispered Mr. Brandon, attaching himself to his counsellor's button-hole; "you understand?"

Mr. Pluckey contracted his thoughtful brows, and nodded intelligently.

"As one of our old kings used to say," continued Mr. Brandon, good-humouredly;—"George the Third, if I recollect right—'thus far will I go, but no further;'" and Mr. Brandon laughed, and,

opening his silver-chased box, tendered snuff to his counsellor.

"What's the consideration?" demanded Mr. Pluckey, with a scrutinizing glance from his keen gray eye.

"Five hundred pounds cash," answered his client.

"For which?" said the counsellor, with a significant pause.

"I declare, to the best of my recollection, judgment, and belief," said Mr. Brandon, supplying the hiatus, "that this gent on my right hand is Lord Petersham. So far I can go with safety, I apprehend?"

"No question of it," replied the counsellor.

"Memories will fail us, you know, Mr. Pluckey," observed the client, with a rapid motion of his sinister eyelid. "Many before now have been convicted by one person being mistaken for another. I don't pretend to be right at all times: I made a mistake, that's all, eh? And when it's considered that I haven't seen either of the boys for some years, such mistakes are *very* excusable. Don't you think so?"

"I do; but where did you say was the real Lord P.—Abroad?"

A cough, or rather the disembodied spirit of a cough—it was so faint and yet so distinct—prompted Mr. Brandon and his astonished counsellor to start, and look towards the japan screen, and then inquiringly at each other. After a few seconds profound silence, Mr. Brandon, to dispel his apprehensions of having been overheard by some asthmatic and invisible auditor, began to criticize the paintings before him with that liberality and

candour which he displayed on all occasions, and which prompted him to apply the same impartial standard of value to works of art, whether in Broker's Alley, or the British Museum.

"I've heard," he said, pointing with his stick at a Dutch picture, representing a miser counting his ducats, and grim death about to extinguish them both,—“I've heard of gents giving as much as twenty or thirty pounds for pictures not much bigger than that one there. Would you believe it?”

"It's very possible," replied Mr. Pluckey. "Pictures, like all other things, are fearfully over-valued."

"They call them originals, I believe," said Mr. Brandon, jocularly; "but it strikes me, Pluckey, that the greatest originals are those who are taken in by them—eh?"

"You're right, sir," replied the counsellor. "I know a place in Lambeth where not fewer than from forty to fifty young men and boys are constantly employed in painting the old masters, their labours being almost exclusively confined to the production of Titians and Correggios."

"Well!" said Mr. Brandon, smiling with his wonted indulgence for the foibles of mankind. "I don't know, after all, that there's much harm in it—it's profitable to oil and colour men, and gives employment to carvers and gilders; though, certainly, it seems wrong to waste gold in that manner just now, when it's so much wanted in the city. What's your opinion of the Bank Charter?"

Mr. Pluckey pronounced it infamous. Peel's bill he execrated—a restricted issue he denounced—a paper currency he derided—foreign exchanges,

bullion, joint stock banks, the scarcity of specie, and the panic of 1825, were all more or less subjected to his powerful castigations, till at length he had nearly involved all the monetary transactions of our unfortunate country, in one universal blast of derision, when Mr. Shuttleworth and Staunton entered the parlour, and averted the threatened catastrophe.

"Well, Mr. Brandon," said the owner of Shuttleworth Hall, after the usual ceremonial preliminaries, "have you duly considered the subject of discussion at our last interview?"

"I have, sir," replied Mr. Brandon, with urbane dignity; "and here," drawing from his coat pocket a paper folded and endorsed,—"and here is a solemn statutory declaration, which I think will meet your views and wishes, sir, in every respect."

"This solemn statutory declaration, as you term it, is not very intelligible," observed Mr. Shuttleworth, when he had carefully read it over. "I suppose it was drawn up by a professional man?"

Mr. Brandon answered with a decided affirmative.

"That perhaps may account for it," returned Mr. Shuttleworth; "but, setting technicalities aside, are you prepared to prove, that this gentleman on my right is the son and heir-at-law of the late Lord Petersham?"

Mr. Brandon's most satisfactory assurance was trembling on his lips—another moment, and Lord Petersham's coronet would have settled upon Staunton's brow, when the screen, behind which Lady Bloomsbury sat at her charitable labours, fell down bodily, caused either by the interposition of the

cat, or some more responsible agent, and inspired two gentlemen present with feelings of embarrassment, which they found it exceedingly difficult to conceal.

The question of preparation put by Mr. Shuttleworth, was answered by Lady Bloomsbury, who, fixing her eyes upon the confounded Brandon, observed, in a quiet but significant manner, "I don't think he is."

"Lady Bloomsbury!" cried Mr. Shuttleworth, with an admonitory look; "what do you mean?"

"I don't think he is," repeated Lady Bloomsbury, nodding ominously at the speechless Brandon, as she placed her needle in the simple garment which she had just completed.

"Perhaps your ladyship will condescend to explain," said Staunton, with a lofty expression of scorn.

"There's no necessity for any explanation," returned Lady Bloomsbury. "I don't think that that gentleman," pointing at the astonished Brandon, "is prepared to afford the evidence of your claim to the Petersham title and estates, which will enable you to obtain possession of them—that is all."

"This is very extraordinary behaviour," cried the owner of Shuttleworth Hall, glancing alternately at Lady Bloomsbury and Mr. Brandon, whose amazement seemed to have paralyzed his powers of oral expression; "very extraordinary, and very unbecoming too."

"Truth, Mr. Shuttleworth, must be consulted before ceremony," replied Lady Bloomsbury, holding up her thimbled finger; "the gentleman understands me, I dare say; but if he should not, here

comes one who, I feel pretty sure, will make my meaning sufficiently easy of comprehension."

And as she spoke, Walter Brandon, as handsome as ever, though somewhat paler than he was wont, with his right arm supported in a black silk handkerchief, presented himself before the assembled disputants.

The first person that caught his attention was Mr. Brandon, who, with his hands behind his portly figure, seemed to have sufficient firmness in his black silk stockings, and resignation in his placid countenance, for any calamity that could possibly overtake him.

"My father!" ejaculated Walter, with an expression of painful surprise.

"Your *foster-father*," said Lady Bloomsbury, advancing and taking Walter's hand with unfeigned affection; "nephew! let me congratulate you on your accession to your title. You are Lord Petersham. Am I not right, sir?"

"You are, madam," replied Mr. Brandon with a bland smile; "that gent is Lord Petersham, most undoubtedly;" and turning to Mr. Pluckey, they conversed together privately for some minutes. During their conference Staunton withdrew; and when it had terminated, he was nowhere to be found.

We shall not interrupt the progress of events by any laboured attempt at describing what our softest pen would be incompetent adequately to portray, namely, the feelings which Mr. Shuttleworth evinced at this extraordinary transmutation of species, by which his humble servant, was suddenly metamorphosed into a peer and a Petersham. Regarding the symbol rather than the individual, and

looking upon personal identity as a subject of no interest but to sophistical schoolmen; his newly engendered veneration for Walter—Lord Petersham, was as profound as at that moment it was unutterable. Strange! what a different aspect Walter had assumed since his recent ennoblement; but what created most astonishment in Mr. Shuttleworth's mind, was the striking family resemblance which he now for the first time discovered between Walter's handsome and exalted features and his own; and as with gladsome eye he fondly traced the *otium* of Shuttleworth amalgamating with the *dignitate* of Petersham, he could not help marvelling exceedingly at the obtuseness, which had hitherto prevented him from perceiving, what he now thought must be apparent to the most careless or prejudiced observer.

A few weeks after this happy restoration, Walter Lord Petersham, led to the hymeneal altar, Miss Shuttleworth, the only surviving daughter, and sole heiress of Nicholas Shuttleworth, Esquire, of Shuttleworth Hall, beneath which venerable roof the nuptials were celebrated with more than ordinary splendour. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Martin O. Bleat, perpetual curate of Monkton-cum-Vesta. Laura Bloomsbury officiated as one of the bridesmaids; Miss Fanny Littledale, the sylph-like belle of Belle-vue Villa, dividing with her the admiration of all beholders saving one, Mr. Thomas Inglewood, who candidly confessed that he had no sympathy for sylphs, but was perfectly content to take Laura Bloomsbury and humanity as he found them. Helen was not present on this interesting occasion, having, it was reported, on account of severe indisposition, gone to Bath, accompanied

by Lady Bloomsbury, in compliance with the recommendation of her medical adviser.

The ceremony concluded, Mr. Marmaduke Brandon, who as Lord Petersham's foster-father, was among the invited guests, beckoned Walter into an ante-room, and, shaking his hand with affectionate cordiality, warmly congratulated him on his good fortune.

"You are a lucky dog," he said, winking his eye as he clapped Walter playfully on the shoulder; "you've got a pretty wife, with a very pretty property, and a title as long as you can enjoy it."

"Sir!" replied Walter, coldly receiving Mr. Brandon's familiar overtures.

"What reward now," said Mr. Brandon, smiling, "do you think your father entitled to for lifting you into the saddle? You mustn't be stingy, you dog!" and Mr. Brandon laughed, and stuck Walter jocosely with his fore finger.

"I don't understand you, sir," replied the young man, with an expression closely verging upon disgust; "whose father do you speak of?"

Mr. Brandon smiled beneficently, and patted himself upon the breast, to indicate his claim to that honourable distinction.

"It's a wise son that knows his own parent," observed Mr. Brandon, agitating his practised eyelid; "but I think *we* know one another pretty well—eh, Watty?"

"Your language, sir, is to me as incomprehensible as your manner is repulsive," returned Walter, unable to restrain the indignation with which his glowing countenance was vividly animated; "am I to understand that you have been guilty of a deli-

berate fraud—that I am *not* the son of Lord Petersham ? ”

“ Nonsense ! nonsense ! ” replied Brandon ; “ what is there to fly in a passion about ? my fraud, as you unfeelingly call it (very improper and undutiful language to a father, by-the-bye), has enabled you to marry the girl of your heart, has transferred you from a poor merchant’s clerk, into a man of independent property, and now you are so ungrateful as to turn round and abuse your only parent for the service he has done you. Oh, shocking ! shocking ! ” and Mr. Brandon waved his hand reproachfully, and sighing, walked away to show how deeply he was hurt by such a melancholy example of filial ingratitude. When he came back from whence he started, he found that, saving his own presence, the apartment was vacant. After a minute’s reflection, he crept softly up stairs, and, pausing at the drawing-room door, listened attentively to what was going forward within.

During the conversation between Walter and his father, the bride and her friends were taking chocolate, and listening to Mr. Inglewood’s graphic description of a fox-chase, under peculiar circumstances, in which that rural solicitor happened, about two years previously, to have been actively engaged. Suddenly the door flew open, and Walter Brandon, pale almost as death, and with a fearful calmness and gravity upon his brow, appeared before the guests, who, struck with astonishment at his appearance, soon became almost as pallid as himself.

Approaching Mary, who sat on the couch, between her cousin Laura and Miss Littledale, Walter gently drew from her hand the ring with which he

had so lately plighted his troth, then addressing Mr. Shuttleworth, whose emotions, as well as those of all present, may be more readily conceived than described, he said, "Sir! you see before you an impostor. You accepted me as your son-in-law. You gave me the hand of your daughter, believing that I was what I had been represented, and what I believed myself to be—the son of Lord Petersham. I have this instant, sir, discovered that I have no claim to that title. I have learned this, sir (I blush to confess it), from the lips of my own father—*there*," and Walter pointed at old Brandon (who at this moment entered the room), with a scornful severity that as ill became the countenance which assumed it, as the occasion on which it was displayed.

"I know not whether you will believe me, sir," continued Walter to Mr. Shuttleworth; "but I solemnly assure you, and call upon my father to confirm my declaration, if he is not dead to all sense of humanity and justice, I assure you, sir, that I have been no party to this base deception, and to show how sincerely I regret having gained your confidence by false representations, I now make the only atonement in my power, one compared to which, death itself would be far, far more desirable, I unhesitatingly renounce all claim upon your daughter."

Mr. Shuttleworth sank into a chair, and gazed, with a wild vacancy, upon the young man, who, disregarding the astonished guests on either side of him, proceeded as follows:—"Having been the unconscious instrument of a fraud, I feel, sir, there is in honour but one course which it is incumbent upon me to pursue."

Walter paused for an instant, then turning to Mary, who sat the uncomplaining picture of tenderness and despair. "Heaven grant," he continued, "that you may be happy, and that your heart may never know the anguish that wrings my own in uttering the last words with which I shall ever address you." He paused again, but suddenly rallying his resolution, said in a low and faltering voice, "Miss Shuttleworth—you are free."

Several times, while his son was speaking, Brandon had attempted to expostulate with him, but Walter heeded him not. He now again addressed him; but, raising his hand with an air of pride, pity, and shame, Walter turned away, and left him to vindicate his innocence before those who had suffered most severely by his duplicity. This arduous task Brandon immediately undertook, but was suddenly interrupted, by Mr. Shuttleworth commanding him to leave the house.

"One word, my dear sir," said Brandon, with a graceful inclination; "one word, and one only."

"I'll not hear you, sir," exclaimed Mr. Shuttleworth, vehemently; "quit my house this instant, or from my own hand, you shall receive that chastisement which your conduct so richly merits."

"Father! father!" cried Mary, as she sank in tears at the feet of the old man, who, flushed with indignation, was about to approach his cool and wily adversary.

"Surely, my dear sir," cried Brandon, "you will not convict me without a hearing—these gents here, I'm certain, will acknowledge that I ask no more than what is fair and reasonable."

"These gents here, sir," observed Tom Inglewood, who had recently left the room, but now returned

with something concealed beneath the skirt of his coat; "these gents here, sir, will acknowledge that if you had what is fair and reasonable, you would have a horse-whipping that would sicken you of your taste for telling lies, as long as you lived, you black-whiskered old scamp."

Mr. Brandon shook his finger, and smiled with an air of conscious security.

"No man dare do it, sir," he said, "the law, sir, the law is my protection."

"In Westminster-hall, it may be," said Tom, "but not in Shuttleworth-hall. Do you see this, you knavish, old, pettifogging-looking blackleg?" and Tom exhibited his riding-whip to the approving gaze of his audacious antagonist.

"I see it, sir," replied Mr. Brandon, laughing.

"Then, just carry your rascally visage through that door, quick," said the solicitor, "or you shall find that it's not only a neat one to look at, but a smart one to go."

"At your peril, sir!" cried Mr. Brandon, shutting his eyes, and smiling with greater satisfaction than ever.

The challenge was scarcely uttered, ere Tom's whip had smartly embraced the broad shoulders of his defier. Again Tom pointed to the door, and bade him go.

"You shall pay for this, sir, and sweetly too," said Mr. Brandon, grinding his teeth with vindictive gusto. "Gents!" he said, addressing the company, "you have all witnessed the savage and unprovoked assault which has been inflicted upon me. I offer no resistance, you see. Good! You shall hear from my attorney to-morrow, sir."

So saying, Mr. Brandon proudly turned his back

upon the solicitor, who replied with a Jacobite sort of injunction, that would have rendered his opponent, had he obeyed it, amenable to the laws of Hanover. As Mr. Brandon, however, did not instantly adopt the proposed scheme of emigration, Tom Inglewood was about unlawfully to raise his foot to expedite his departure, when his discreet antagonist rushed from his presence, and tumbled down stairs, with a celerity which, from his dignity and bulk, would scarcely have been thought practicable. On reaching the lawn, old Brandon paused, and having recovered his breath, looked up at the open window, and shaking his fist at his assailant, announced his determination to prosecute him forthwith, with the law's most unrelenting rigour, a threat at which the solicitor laughed heartily, and told him that he and the law might go and be bothered together, for what they were worth, and as for being afraid of a lawyer, he (Mr. Inglewood) calculated he was a match for any twelve-stone man among them; in support of which opinion, he expressed his readiness for five hundred pounds a side, any morning before breakfast, to 'enter his judgment' (speaking figuratively) against all the power of attorneys in the United Kingdom, and had no objection to have a couple of rounds with his old professional antagonist, the attorney-general, to begin with.

CHAPTER XIV.

I loved her—woo'd her—when I deem'd her heart
Was, save to me, an undiscover'd isle,
Blossoming sweet as in creation's dawn. :
Alas! I find a footprint on the sands;
And, sighing, bid my fairy world adieu!

THE BROKEN CHARM.

OLD Lord Kew and his interesting bride had gone to Bath to spend, not the honeymoon, but the more domesticated lunar month, immediately ensuing thereon. We merely record this circumstance as an innocent little piece of gossip; but there were certain uncharitable people in those days who, on that sandy foundation, built strongly-fortified suspicions, calculated to compromise Lady Bloomsbury and Helen in the estimation of all, who admire candour of expression and singleness of heart. For it will be remembered, that Lady Bloomsbury's visit to the dowager-city of Bladud—where fashion once so gracefully waved her coral sceptre, with bells pendent, and despatched butterfly-couriers with her imperial edicts to all the surrounding world of mannikins—was ostensibly occasioned by the indisposition of Helen, and had no connection with any matrimonial-agency scheme or speculation whatever.

Notwithstanding these professions of her ladyship, it was rumoured in certain well-informed circles that Lady Bloomsbury, having been defeated in her project of securing Lord Petersham for her dear Helen,

was now seeking to effect a reconciliation with the slighted Captain Hippesley ; or, at all events, that she wished to obtain such information as would enable her finally to decide, whether an alliance with the heir-presumptive of Lord Kew, could be concluded with sufficient safety, to exonerate her from those self-reproaches, which an unsatisfactory result would otherwise entail upon her, as Helen's responsible adviser.

Another, but less adequate motive, ascribed to Lady Bloomsbury for her sojourn at Bath, was derived from the expected visit of the Grand Duke of Schoffenspitzhoffel—a circumstance which would necessarily attract a large proportion of that pattern society, which always attended the ducal migrations, and with whose members Lady Bloomsbury deemed it her highest and happiest privilege, to claim a sympathy of taste and feeling.

It was on the evening of the grand duke's arrival, that a complimentary display of fireworks was announced to take place on Lansdowne Hill ; and consequently all the *élite* of Bath—comprising Lord and Lady Kew, Count Strutzinbootz, Sir Felix and Lady Swadenham, Admiral Stormer, the honourable Mr. Dismay and Lady Dismay, Major Crocus and Mrs. Crocus, Captain Hippesley, Dr. Lanthorne, Serjeant Tattlejay and Miss Rosina Tattlejay, Mr. Neare and family, and though last, not least, Lady Bloomsbury and Miss Bloomsbury—might be seen, shortly after dusk, promenading on the 'Point,' from whence they had a magnificent view of the entire city beneath them, whose terraces, twinkling with variegated lamps, and combined with the illuminated windows of almost every mansion—brightening, as it were, into gladness at recognising

the Grand Duke of Schoffenspitzhoffel among their most exclusive admirers—suggested to Miss Rosina Tattlejay vivid reminiscences of ‘Lalla Rookh,’ which she delightedly communicated to her learned papa.

Old Lord Kew and his nephew Captain Hipposley, were walking with Lady Kew between them; so that Lady Bloomsbury, who was most anxious to have a deliberate view of the bride, felt much gratified, as they passed the bench where she and Helen were listening to a military band, which, judiciously stationed in a cavern under the brow of the hill, produced by its subdued harmony a most charming effect, and led Miss Rosina Tattlejay to remark to her papa, as they played one of Lanner’s waltzes, that by closing her eyes, she could almost fancy herself at the ‘Willis’ Rooms:’ it was so soft, so sweet, so like a dream of ‘Araby the blest.’

Lord Kew was a spirited-looking, florid-faced little man, with short white hair, a Madras cravat, and a tight-fitting frock-coat, in which he stood as erect as a dart. Lady Kew was of a tall, slender, and almost irreproachable figure—but not handsome, Lady Bloomsbury considered, by any means; her nose—if we may be allowed such an expression—being in the form of a Turkish scimitar, and in tint—to use the mildest term possible—pinkish. Her age—but that difficult problem we leave to Lady Bloomsbury, who, being more immediately interested in its solution, took very great care in forming her opinion, and had no hesitation whatever in fixing it at forty-three.

Captain Hipposley and Helen had not met since the day on which his uncle’s marriage was publicly proclaimed, when poor Horace received that terrible look of scorn which, in his morbid condition, he

attributed to his fancied pedal imperfection. Whether his uncle's presence deterred him from recognising Lady Bloomsbury and Helen, or whether he had no wish to renew the acquaintance which had been so abruptly dissolved, we pretend not to determine. At all events, Hippesley took no more notice of them than if they were perfect strangers. Lady Bloomsbury was beginning to feel uneasy, and almost hurt, at this strange coolness on the part of Horace, when her feelings, and those of all around her, were painfully excited by an accident, which, though simple in itself, threatened to be attended with important consequences to more persons than one.

The lofty firmament, serene and blue, from which all cloudy vestiges had considerably retired, presented a canopy beneath which the resources of pyrotechny, kept up a perpetual gallopade of imitative stars, causing those more enduring luminaries, whose brightness they outshone, to hide their diminished heads, and wax pale with a sense of humility, like—as Miss Rosina Tattlejay wickedly suggested to her papa—like the five Miss Parlor-beans at Lady Swadenham's last ball, when they sat (poor slighted wall-flowers !) the evening through unpitied and alone. Suddenly, and to the loudly-uttered consternation of the promenaders, who saw the impending danger, a rocket-stick descended from its high estate, and alighting upon old Lord Kew's ill-guarded head, reduced him to a state of mental and bodily prostration, that prompted poor Lady Kew to give vent to her anguish, and assume an attitude, that Miss Rosina Tattlejay, whispering her papa, with less humanity than truth, compared to Medora, or some such poetical heroine, weeping

over the dead body of her—father. No time was lost in conveying poor Lord Kew to his hotel, where, shortly after his arrival, Lady Bloomsbury called alone to inquire if there were any hopes of his lordship's recovery. Of course, she never anticipated meeting Captain Hippesley, and was apparently much surprised, when Horace came down and shook hands with that air of melancholy kindness, which became at once his pale features and the occasion of his sorrow.

"Is your poor dear uncle quite out of danger?" said Lady Bloomsbury, much relieved by knowing that he still survived, and that while there was life there was hope.

"He is," replied Horace: "a good night's rest will, I think, completely restore him."

"How thankful we ought to be!" observed Lady Bloomsbury, with an unconscious sigh.

"But I regret to say that Lady Kew"—

"She has not met with any"—And Lady Bloomsbury paused, as if not daring to give utterance to the fearful apprehensions, by which she was sensibly agitated.

Horace shook his head dolefully.

"Dr. Lanthorne thinks it exceedingly doubtful whether she will recover the shock, to which her nervous system has been exposed."

"Dear! dear! how very distressing!" cried Lady Bloomsbury, looking in the young man's face with extreme sympathy. "But you must bear up with these afflictions, Captain Hippesley: we all have our trials, as I have often told Helen."

"Is not Miss Bloomsbury in Bath?" Horace inquired.

"She is; but her health is very indifferent," re-

plied Lady Bloomsbury. "Her spirits are so much affected."

Horace looked earnestly at his informant, and said he was sorry to hear it.

"She never used to be so," rejoined Lady Bloomsbury, "till of late—never. However, anything that we can do, Captain Hippesley, to relieve your poor dear uncle, I'm sure we shall be most happy, at any time; therefore, pray don't hesitate, if you should require any assistance, to send to us. I will give you our address, in case you should need it."

Captain Hippesley expressed himself obliged and grateful for Lady Bloomsbury's kind offer, and promised that, if necessity required, he would certainly avail himself of it. Thus was peace restored; and Helen and Horace once more wandered hand-in-hand along the narrow primrose path which leads to happiness and Hymen. But, alas! it was like many another peace—the short-lived prelude to still more expensive wars, more desolation, tears, and suffering.

The captain had been visiting Lady Bloomsbury and Helen; when on his way back to his hotel, he entered a circulating-library to borrow a soothing novel for the toothache, and where he found a young woman with dark eyes and sharp features, who was engaged, with a pair of scissars, in cutting out chimney-ornaments in tinted paper.

"How do you do, sir?" said the young woman, with modest politeness. "I hope Miss Bloomsbury is quite well, sir?"

"I beg your pardon," replied Captain Hippesley, affecting that partial deafness which enables the proud so quietly to confound the impertinent.

"My name is Ferret, sir," said the young person

with the scissars. "I was Miss Bloomsbury's lady's-maid, if you remember, sir."

"Oh, to be sure—Miss Ferret," returned Captain Hipplesey; "I beg your pardon for not recognising you at the moment. You had some reason for leaving Miss Bloomsbury, of course?"

"Well, sir," replied Miss Ferret, looking down at the little French pockets in her black silk apron, "I should be extremely sorry to say anything that might be considered disrespectful either to Miss Bloomsbury or to Lady Bloomsbury—but Miss Bloomsbury's temper was so very uncertain, that although I can put up with a great deal, and have done so—more than many people are aware of—yet, I assure you, sir, I would not have remained another month with Miss Bloomsbury on any consideration whatever."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Hipplesey; "but the truth is, Miss Bloomsbury has lately had many things both to depress and to vex her—the death of a cousin in India—the loss of a cameo, upon which she set very great value, it having been the gift of her god-father, and many other things have conspired to cause the occasional petulance of which you complain."

A smile—a proud smile—lit up the unamiable features of Miss Ferret, as she said, "I don't think Miss Bloomsbury's temper is owing to either of those causes, sir—of course, I don't wish to contradict—far from it, but you know, sir, we all have our little private opinions."

"What do you mean by private opinions; may I be allowed to ask?"

"I'd rather not be called upon to answer that

question, sir," replied Miss Ferret, laughing with playful provocation.

"If it's a secret," said Captain Hipplesley, "I waive it at once."

Miss Ferret hesitated for a moment, and snipping the end of her apron string with her scissors, observed that she could not say it was a secret particularly, inasmuch as she fancied it was so well known to almost every body; in reply to which observation, Captain Hipplesley stated that it was decidedly a secret to him, and pressed Miss Ferret for an explanation of the circumstances to which she had so obscurely alluded.

"I presume, sir," said Miss Ferret, with manifest reluctance, "that you have heard of the little affair between Miss Bloomsbury and Lord —, dear!—I'm afraid I ought not to tell. I'm sure Lady Bloomsbury would never forgive me, if she knew me to breathe a syllable respecting that very unfortunate little affair."

Captain Hipplesley flushed with excitement, begged Miss Ferret to be more explicit, and assured her that no communication she might think proper to make, would be hereafter employed to her prejudice. Thus entreated and assured, Miss Ferret took from a drawer a small packet of letters, all of which were directed to Miss Bloomsbury, in a hand which Captain Hipplesley had never seen before.

"When I left Miss Bloomsbury, she lent me one of her boxes to put some of my things in," observed the ex-lady's maid, "and in the box, strange to say, was this packet of letters, which, as you will see by looking at them, are all ad-

dressed to 'my dearest Helen' by Lord Clarence Linford, who, by-the-bye, is the nobleman that made Miss Bloomsbury a present of the cameo, which she pretended was given to her by her god-father."

Captain Hipplesley, with a trembling hand, opened one of the letters, and as he hurriedly glanced over its contents, his eyes blazed with such a fearful but beautiful lustre, that Miss Ferret could not help smiling in admiration of it.

"Those were the letters, sir," whispered Miss Ferret, with an air of pleasing confidence, "which Miss Bloomsbury was going to law about. She did enter an action against his lordship for breach of promise, but it was settled, I understand, before it came to trial, by Lord Linford paying five thousand pounds and all the expenses."

If we may credit their own vaunting declarations, there are some persons whose mental edifices are so loosely put together, that when overtaken by a sudden surprise, they may be knocked down with a feather. Though Captain Hipplesley did not naturally belong to this fragile order of beings, his agitation at the discovery of Helen's prior attachment, must have destroyed whatever confidence his friends had hitherto entertained of his permanent stability. Horace felt as if his mind's eye had been suddenly couched, a film was removed from his inward sight, and he now, for the first time, perceived that he had been playing the dupe most egregiously, and that his morbid fancies had prevented him from discerning what had doubtless been long conspicuous to every disinterested observer, namely, that Helen's affections were fixed not upon himself alone, but upon his

presumptive heirship and the barony of Kew. Almost unconsciously he looked at his foot, that offending member, suggestive of so many dark and scornful glances, and, for the first time also, was compelled to acknowledge that its formation was faultless—there was no deformity nor approach to it—the Apollo Belvidere could not be more correctly supported. But this discovery, instead of inspiring Horace with grateful emotions, only tended to aggravate that hepatic derangement which, according to some theorists, was the source of all his melancholy hallucinations. To erase at once and for ever from his memory, all trivial fond records,—to hate as passionately as he had once loved, was of course his immediate and unalterable determination. In accordance with these feelings, and framing in his mind a letter to Helen, full of the deadliest venom, that ever emanated from a proud splenetic lover, Horace returned to his hotel. With great mental labour, and after wasting at least half a quire of Bath post, before he could give a keen edge to his epistolary reproaches, Horace was about to lay down his poisoned arrow, when a sky-blue perfumed billet arrived from Lady Bloomsbury, announcing her ladyship's intention of visiting the assembly-room that evening, and hoping to meet Captain Hipposley in that select circle, whose society always afforded her so much pleasure. In a postscript Lady Bloomsbury was happy to say, that Helen's health had greatly improved, but her spirits still needed a little gentle excitement, to recover their wonted elasticity. 'I understand her ladyship's meaning,' thought Horace, as he carefully folded up the billet, and inspected, suspiciously its mottoed seal, 'Helen will

be there—Query,’ and reclining in his easy cushioned chair, Horace remained for some minutes buried in thought. At length, with marvellous deliberation, he took up the pernicious letter he had written and slowly tore it in fragments. Yes!—he was resolved. He certainly would see Helen again, and, enjoy the vindictive satisfaction of gazing in silent scorn, upon one so bright with beauty, and so false at heart.

When Horace entered the ball-room, Helen was conversing with Sir Otto de Beauvoir. Not wishing to arrest her attention till she was quite disengaged, Horace passed into the card-room, where a number of rouged dowagers, in turbans and feathers, were playing whist, amongst whom was Lady Bloomsbury, who received Horace with a gracious smile, and told him in a whisper that Helen had some news for him, which he would find very interesting, she had no doubt.

Horace made a grave inclination, and returning to the ball-room, perceived Helen and Sir Otto among a little knot of exclusives, from whom, however, they presently seceded, and retired to a seat where they could converse secure from remark or interruption. On Captain Hippesley’s approach, the knight instantly rose and politely insisted on his friend taking his place, which, after some hesitation, Horace accepted, and Sir Otto went away with a springy and volatile carriage, as if he really felt the stimulating points of those miniature arrows which, according to his own report, Cupid was constantly discharging at his unprotected heart.

“Have you heard the news?” said Helen, with a mysterious smile. “To think of the treachery

of which your sex is capable ! really, it makes one shudder."

"What treachery do you allude to?" demanded Horace, in a tone of measured austerity.

"Lord Petersham and Mary Shuttleworth," replied Helen. "Is it not dreadful?"

"It might be," returned Horace, "were it of less frequent occurrence; but deception, whether in man or woman, has lost its terrors with its rarity."

"You are pleased to be severe," said Helen, with a glance of suspicion at her doubtful admirer.

"I am candid," replied Hipposley; "to those who practise dissimulation, unveiled truth can scarcely be otherwise than distasteful."

There was a pause. It was broken by Helen.

"Some persons, I believe," she said, playing with her fan, "delight in what they call satirical enigmas. Speaking like oracles, they naturally expect to be regarded with awe. For my own part, I think their weakness is less to be pitied than despised."

"You are right, madam," returned Hipposley, with such a fierce expression of resentment upon his gathered brow, that Helen found it almost impossible to withdraw her attention from him. "To confide in human faith," he said, "may well be pronounced weakness, by those who look upon the sacred temple of the affections as a licensed market-place, where love is weighed and meted, and where parents chaffer for a settlement till the heart's religion becomes a by-word and a jest. Such weakness, madam, I doubt not, you sincerely despise."

"Have you finished?" said Helen, with a scornful curve of her proud but beautiful lip.

Horace, who sat with his arms folded and apparently buried in thought, made no reply.

"You have been endeavouring to say some very spiteful things," continued Miss Bloomsbury; "and, doubtless, you wish that I should acknowledge how much they have pained me. I will comply with your wishes:—I exceedingly regret that I ever reposed confidence in one so *mean*, as to make his charges sufficiently ambiguous to render them unanswerable, and so prudent as to select the place for exhibiting his insolence, where he knows it cannot be resented."

"My remarks are not sufficiently intelligible?" said Hippesley, every lineament of his countenance quivering with passion. "I can be more explicit, if you desire it."

"I have no doubt of your malice," returned Helen, "though I may entertain the same opinion as others of your capacity, for the utterance of anything beyond the most unqualified and despicable falsehoods."

Irritated almost beyond endurance, his heart burning with a sense of his supposed wrongs, Horace, nevertheless, hesitated at the thought of openly convicting Helen of her duplicity. His hesitation, however, was but momentary.

"There are three words," he said, in a subdued but distinct tone, as if every syllable was tipped with venom,—*"three words, madam, whose truth, I think, you will scarcely venture to challenge, unless, indeed, there is perjury in a name."*

"Go on, sir," replied Helen, the crimson which had suddenly suffused her cheek as suddenly yielding to a death-like pallor. "I have always understood that your friends derived as much amusement

from your veracity, as your enemies from your cowardice."

"And I, madam," replied Hipplesley, "have also understood that your enemies were as highly entertained by your baffled expectations of a coronet as, I doubt not, your friends were sincerely gratified at the ample indemnity for its loss, which you received from a nobleman, whose well-founded distrust entailed upon him so severe a sacrifice. The nobleman, madam, to whom I allude is,"—and, sinking his voice almost to a whisper, Horace added the three fatal words,—“Lord Clarence Linford.”

The professional intrepidity of Hipplesley was unquestionable; but though, in discharge of his military duties, he could without hesitation have marched up to the cannon's mouth, it must be confessed that his heroism evaporated before the aspect of indignant woman. On Helen's blanched and steadfast countenance, as she looked at him with suspended breath, that agony of a proud and wounded spirit was impressed, which seeks utterance in something more terrible than reproach or menace. Fortunately, at this critical moment, Sir Otto de Beauvoir made his airy appearance, and, like the introduction of Shakspeare's clowns, destroyed the deep-toned solemnity of the scene.

"I come," he said, addressing Helen, with a graceful expansion of his palms—"I come to enforce—you will excuse me, Captain Hipplesley, I am an old friend—a friend," he added, hastily correcting himself, "of long standing—I come to enforce the redemption of a promise—will you honour me?" and presenting his curved arm, he smiled invitingly at Helen, who rose without

uttering a word, and permitted the knight to conduct her to the remote extremity of the saloon, where a set of quadrilles was in process of formation.

As Horace was about to retire, he paused for a moment, and looked back at Helen, who stood beside Sir Otto de Beauvoir. Their eyes met—for the last time? No.

By that strange infatuation, which sometimes prompts the conscience-stricken wretch to linger about the spot, where his crime was perpetrated, and its most conclusive evidence exists, Horace, on reaching the paved court adjoining the Assembly-rooms, remained for some minutes in a state of irresolution, from which he was roused by some drops of rain reminding him of the place, which he had selected for his pensive promenade. Through a dark veil of clouds, which continued to shed a transient shower, the moon's pale orb was dimly visible, diffusing a partial radiance on the towers of the old abbey, while all beneath them lay wrapt in sombre shade; a contrast which, though possessing but slight claims to novelty, awoke in Hipposley's mind some sage reflections. 'Light and darkness'—such were his musings—"Whence comes the darkness?—from yonder elevation. Were the world one universal plane, light would be universal. 'Tis pride that casts upon the social hemisphere its pall of misery. By pride the angels fell from light to darkness; and by that passion Helen ——"

The soft melodious swell of music from the ball-room, arrested this profound though somewhat incoherent soliloquy, and recalling him to a sense of his absurdity, Horace was about to depart, when a sound like the rustling of leaves prompting him to

turn round, he beheld a figure clad in white, which passed him with a quick and hurried step. Despite of the nun-like appearance induced by having tied a kerchief over her dark tresses, Horace detected at a glance the exquisite form of Helen Bloomsbury. For a moment he stood transfixed with surprise, till observing that Helen had paused in a drooping attitude, when he hastily advanced, and gazing in her face, was alarmed to perceive that it was pallid and composed as that of a corpse.

"Miss Bloomsbury," he cried, in extreme agitation, "you are ill—seriously ill; let me support you."

The words were scarcely spoken when Helen made a faint attempt to disengage herself; but her strength failed her, and she sank lifeless in his arms. At the same instant a small cut-glass bottle fell from her hand on the pavement. She had taken poison.

Hippesley's cries for assistance were quickly responded to by the company in the ball-room, and whose numbers were speedily increased by several strangers, to whom Horace, overcome by his emotions, committed his burden, and hurried away; but not without those bitter pangs which the sensitive often experience, when they have inflicted misery on others, even though conscious that what they have done admits of no just cause for self-reproach.

But had Horace no cause for self-reproach? Far from it. He felt that he had acted a dastardly part. His taunts, his scorn, the scene he had chosen for the humiliation of a defenceless woman, were now emblazoned on his memory with imperishable fire. Impelled to self-destruction by his

vindictive agency, if Helen died, he felt that he was morally, if not legally, responsible for her death—and could he survive it? No. The only atonement he could make for his grievous error—his own blood—should proclaim the intensity of his remorse, the insupportable wretchedness of his existence.

With these feelings Horace reached his hotel, and throwing himself on a couch, remained for some time in a state of mental excitement verging upon distraction. Suddenly he was roused by a knock at the door, and before he could reach it a tall figure, attired in deep mourning, entered and presented him with a letter. The seal was black. Horace tore it open. A glance—a maddening glance—told him the fatal truth. The letter fell from his hand, and he sank prostrate with conscious guilt and unutterable agony. A voice—a whisper—startled him. He looked up and beheld the tall stranger; an expression of fiend-like derision was on his pallid features, and his large eyes glittered with malignity, as drawing a poniard from his breast, he presented it to the unhappy wretch that was kneeling at his feet. Horace seized the flashing weapon, his hand trembled for an instant, and then—he started up and found himself in darkness—it was a dream.

When, early on the following morning, Horace sent to inquire respecting the state of Miss Bloomsbury, he learned that his suspicion of her having taken poison was incorrect. It seemed that, overcome by the excitement of her interview with Hippesley, she had suddenly, and without Lady Bloomsbury's knowledge, quitted the ball-room for the purpose of returning home in a chair. The abrupt

appearance of Horace, however, had produced the insensibility which led him to form a conjecture that had no real foundation. The vinaigrette which gave rise to this apprehension, she had dropped at the moment after fainting away.

A few words will elucidate the mystery of Lord Clarence Linford's attachment to Helen Bloomsbury, so obscurely hinted at by Miss Ferret. It was to the private theatricals at Talma Castle that Captain Hippesley owed his introduction to Helen ; and, by a singular coincidence, at the same momentous crisis, Lord Clarence, who was one of many rapt spectators of Helen's histrionic triumph, felt his sensitive bosom penetrated by the thrilling tones of the lovely and accomplished votary of Melpomene. The combined attentions of Horace, a baron in expectancy, and Clarence, a lord in *esse*, were productive of much painful perplexity to the object of them ; and, partly with and partly without Lady Bloomsbury's recommendation, Helen temporized, hesitated, and was lost. Upon the principle that one canary in a cage, is worth two nightingales out of it, Helen, obeying the natural dictates of her proud aspiring disposition, would have bestowed her hand, if not her heart, on Lord Clarence Linford ; but, unfortunately, the alliance was strenuously opposed by his lordship's step-mother, the dowager-countess, who had more influence than most proper parents exercise over his lordship's feeble resolution. Hippesley's regiment was at this time quartered in Ireland, and Helen, who certainly had a stronger personal regard for the high-spirited Horace, than for his poetical and amiable rival, maintained with the captain a correspondence of a much more tender character than the prior recognition of Lord Linford's suit

rendered at all justifiable. The young and noble poet was living in the daily hope of obtaining his step-mother's consent to his union with Helen Bloomsbury, when, by some means,—it is supposed through the treacherous devices of Miss Ferret,—the correspondence between Helen and Hippesley was brought under his lordship's observation. The effect upon the poor susceptible Clarence was almost fatal: he never saw Helen again. The dowager-countess exulted. Helen was silent; while Lady Bloomsbury, overwhelmed with indignant astonishment, and adopting the advice of her best friends, commenced legal proceedings against the unfortunate suitor, which were compromised by Lord Clarence paying some five thousand pounds, to escape the laceration of his feelings by those dreadful gentlemen of the long robe, who wield the terrors of the inquisition now, as effectually as did those high-minded pleaders who never took a fee in the olden time, when conscience was stretched upon the rack in place of the bar, and damages were given by thumb-screws instead of by a jury.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Owl is in the belfry old,
Preaching to spirits grim,
The dark wolf round the lonely fold
Prowls in the moonlight dim,
While blue lights, dancing here and there,
Seem full of ghostly glee,
And maidens weep, with streaming hair,
Beneath the willow tree.

ST. WINIFRED'S EVE.

It was near midnight. In an ill-looking smithy, whose closed shutters rendered the abiding darkness still more conspicuous, sat an old bald-headed blacksmith, with a pair of large black-rimmed spectacles on his hooked nose. He was reading a jaundiced-looking volume, by the aid of a melancholy oil lamp on the forge, where heaps of cinders, and newly-wrought horse-shoes, proclaimed that his scholastic pursuits did not withdraw him altogether from the sphere of more profitable industry, for which his hardened sinews were so aptly qualified. The work over which he bent his grizzled brows, was an elaborate disquisition upon demonology and witchcraft—subjects with which, from his appearance, it would not have been an uncharitable presumption to have supposed him practically conversant. A sleek black cat, whose green eyes shone with phosphorescent light, passed to and fro upon his shoulders, or paused, and, stretching forth its curious head,

peered over the book of *diablerie*, in whose cabalistical contents it seemed to take a feline interest. And there, at silent midnight, with his bright anvil before him, and his huge bellows quiescent above, sat the old bald-headed spectacled blacksmith, and his cat, like some retired necromancer and his inseparable familiar.

Three soft but distinct raps on the outside of the smithy, interrupted the blacksmith and his companion in the prosecution of their studies. Thrusting the demonology beneath his leathern apron, he unbarred the shutters, and admitted three men whose appearance was something between that of gipsies and poachers, and whom he severally addressed by the names of Swingate, Hawley, and Naggle.

"Fine night," observed the blacksmith, looking up at the sky through his large black-rimmed spectacles.

"Don't see it," muttered Naggle, stooping to button one of his gaiters; "too much moon by half."

"How so?" said the blacksmith gruffly; "can't have too much of a good thing."

"But it ain't a good thing," returned Naggle. "I look at nights in a bis'ness pint o' view—bis'ness is bis'ness—moons is all very pretty for your nobs, wot have nothing to do but to loll on strawberry beds all night, and kiss their lily-white hands to it, but what's its vally to men o' bis'ness, sich as us?—why it ain't worth so much as the froth on a gallon o' porter—it's like baby-linen, a eyesore to them as don't stand in need of it. How about the traps—where's the jemmy?"

The blacksmith drew from beneath his cinders a

crowbar, which he handed to Naggle, and Naggle delivered to Hawley.

"The darky?" cried Naggle; "quick."

A dark lantern was produced by the blacksmith, who, having lit it, gave it to Swingate, who hid it under his coat.

"Now then," said Naggle, opening his clasp-knife, and testing its edge with his thumb; "give us the keys and the crape."

In compliance with this demand, a bunch of skeleton keys, and three pieces of black crape, were presented to Naggle, who deposited the former in his pocket, and the latter in his close fitting seal-skin cap.

These burglarious arrangements being completed, the blacksmith unfastened the back entrance of his smithy, and having let his friends out, wished them success, closed the shutters again, and returned to his anvil, his familiar, and his meditations.

The moon, veiled by fleecy clouds, shed a hazy light upon the serpentine brook bordered with dwarf pollards, along whose banks the robbers silently directed their steps, ever and anon glancing round to ascertain that they were secure from observation, and occasionally startled by some volatile member of the finny tribe, making a sudden splash among the bulrushes, which in the cool night breeze slowly waved their grenadier caps above the limpid flags that grew around them. On reaching an angle of the brook, which, diverted from its original course, ran brawling away, like urchins just released from school, to join a flashing estuary adjacent to some roaring flour mills, the robbers sprang over the channel, and continued their journey across a meadow, in which stood a conical hay-rick, support-

ed on stone pillars. As they were passing it at some distance, Swingate suddenly halted with the crow-bar over his shoulder, and pointing in alarm to some red-coloured object beneath the rick, betrayed his compunctious visitings by seriously recommending his colleagues to turn back, and come again another time. This pusillanimous proposition was scouted by Naggle, who, boldly pushing forward, conducted his comrades to an old-fashioned mansion overhung with ivy, and which was separated from the adjoining close by a substantial brick wall, which had originally been fortified by a *chevaux-de-frise* of broken glass, but of which defensive appliances but few traces now remained. Here the robbers paused, and throwing down their bludgeons, proceeded to equip themselves for action by covering their faces with the crape requisite to prevent their personal recognition. Having ascertained, by due circumspection, that no danger existed, Naggle scaled the wall, followed by his companions. This done, they commenced operations with their crow-bar at the laundry door, where they soon effected an entry without causing any noise, save a slight tinkling of glass; and having taken off their shoes, proceeded to make a seizure of such portable chattels, as they might deem best adapted to their joint and several necessities,

Aided by the dark lanthorn, with which they were provided, the robbers were busily engaged in the parlour, filling a capacious sack, with sundry spoons, tankards, and silver candlesticks, when they were surprised and startled by cries from without of 'thieves!' and rushing into the garden, beheld a young soldier on the wall, brandishing one of their own neglected bludgeons, and shouting 'thieves!

thieves! more thieves!' with frantic vehemence. Springing up at the wall, Naggle was about to scale it, when the young soldier ran towards him, and knocking him on the head with his weapon, caused him to release his hold, and to fall back stunned upon a bed of heart's-ease, on which he had before ruthlessly trampled. Similar attempts to escape were made by Swingate and Hawley, and with similar results; the young soldier fought as a British warrior alone can fight, not, however, in the heat of victory, forgetting to keep his voice in full play till he had fairly roused all the inmates of the mansion, one of whom, a red-nosed old gentleman in a night-cap, discharged a double-barrelled blunderbuss from the first-floor window, the report of which had scarcely ceased, ere a sonorous alarm from the adjoining house pealed forth its tocsin-like summons, which continued without intermission, till the whole neighbourhood being thrown into a state of perfect nocturnal consternation, a detachment of footmen, coachmen, grooms, and stable-boys, most of them being in half-dress, and all armed with pitchforks, sticks, and rusty swords, marched on to the battle-ground, where Naggle and his friends, with broken heads, lay groaning and lamenting their miserable destiny. No time was lost in binding the vanquished culprits hand and foot, and, as if their captors anticipated the most sanguinary resistance, each prisoner was carried away by four strong men, and attended by an advanced guard, who shouldered their forks, and performed their responsible duties with martial inflexibility and pride.

The mansion whose privacy Naggle and his accomplices had so unlawfully invaded, was the resi-

dence of Dr. Hedgehog, who, it may be remembered, was Mr. Shuttleworth's medical adviser, and one of his honoured guests on a special occasion, whereof ample mention has already been made. This rude but worthy disciple of Pythagoras, whose anti-carnivorous predilections had gained him so wide a celebrity, was sitting at his frugal breakfast, consisting of a salad, a slice of brown bread, and a bowl of warm milk; his brawny throat, as usual, scorning the artificial restraints of modern cravatism, and displaying a small golden clasp, by which his linen collar was effectually secured. The window behind him was open, admitting the fresh morning air, perfumed with honeysuckle, when something suddenly shaved his ear, and a small garden cucumber fell into the basin from which he imbibed his favourite lacteal beverage. He was starting up to inquire from whose innate depravity this vegetable projectile derived its impetus, when Walter Brandon quietly entered the breakfast parlour.

"There's somebody throwing cucumbers at me," said Dr. Hedgehog, looking out of the window and rubbing his ear.

Walter observed that most likely it was the drummer boy, who had saved them from being robbed last night, and whom he had just seen in the garden pulling up radishes, and consuming them with avidity.

"Audacious young scamp!" said the doctor, wiping some pale splashes from his black silk vest with a handkerchief; "just ring the bell, and let's see what sort of stuff this young hero is made of."

Walter did as desired, and presently a stout old lady, in a mob cap and spectacles, made her appearance.

"Has that boy finished his breakfast yet?" asked the doctor; "if so, send him up, Mrs. Devonport."

"Finished!" exclaimed Mrs. Devonport, unconsciously raising her hands; "it's my belief, doctor, he never will finish—he eats, for all the world, like a boa-constructor. And then to see what tricks he's up to—standing on his head like a monkey, clapping his feet together, and singing!—I never heard such strange things in my life. I think the boy's possessed—I do really, doctor."

"Send him up," said the doctor, clearing off the remains of his salad. "I'll soon find out his possessions, if he has any."

While Mrs. Devonport is performing her mission, we may take the opportunity to explain how Walter Brandon came to intrude upon the hospitality of Dr. Hedgehog. After leaving Shuttleworth Hall, on that disastrous day which saw at once the consummation, and the destruction of his most fondly cherished hopes, Walter was seized with a sudden giddiness, the effect of intense mental excitement, in which state he met Dr. Hedgehog, with whom he had long been intimately acquainted. The physician's practised eye at once perceived his disordered condition, and having, with some difficulty, ascertained from him the nature and origin of his complaint, Dr. Hedgehog insisted upon Walter going home with him, and remaining there till, by proper management, his health, if not his happiness, was perfectly restored; the benevolent doctor, however, being more sanguine than Walter thought at all reasonable, in his expectations of accomplishing both those desiderata.

Notwithstanding his rugged aspect, and the

abruptness of his manners, our abstemious doctor had certain peculiarities which were more deserving of imitation than derision. The unflinching champion of absolute honesty, no less than the able expounder of comparative anatomy, he deemed a distressed martyr quite as worthy of preservation as a fossil megatherium, and looked upon Walter, whose honourable conduct elicited his warmest praise, with the same sort of interest, that would be excited in many of his professional brethren, by an American giant or a champion of England.

Thoughtful and pale, Walter sat at the breakfast table, which was liberally furnished with coffee and tongue; for Dr. Hedgehog, though considered by some a gastronomical fanatic, was universally admired for his impartial toleration of all less orthodox appetites. He was discussing with his host the exciting events of the night, when a voice without caused him to start from his seat, with an expression of astonishment as vivid, as if his name had been pronounced by some long-departed friend, whose shadowy form he expected momentarily would present itself before his incredulous vision. In this state of breathless surprise, he was standing when the door flew open, and a young soldier, with closely cropped reddish hair, in black smalls, and minus shoes and stockings, walked into the parlour upon his hands, and having thrown a summerset which restored him to his proper position, looked about him to ascertain what sort of company he had introduced himself to. The first person that arrested his wandering gaze was Walter Brandon, into whose arms he sprang, with a cry of affectionate delight, which showed, no less than the rapid succession of hugs that fol-

lowed it, his passionate attachment to the individual whom he thus temporarily deprived of all powers of respiration.

"What, James—my foster-brother!" exclaimed Walter, smiling, and trying to detain him; but the professor, having satisfied the first promptings of his impulsive nature, hastened to give more ample vent to his emotions, by standing on his head, and singing with heartfelt energy a little doggerel of his own invention, commencing—

"The world's turn'd topsy-turvy,
Ve're all capsl'd together;
Poor people! now walk on your heads,
And save a load of leather.
 Ri tol looral," &c. &c.

Then springing on his feet again, he looked at Walter, and burst into a rapturous fit of laughter, which, however, gradually became broken and mellowed, till at last it dwindled away into a convulsive exhibition of tears.

These extraordinary performances completely nonplussed Dr. Hedgehog, who began to suspect that he had got a young lunatic in his house, till the improvisatore, having finished his rhymes, his laughter, and his tears, at length showed some slight symptoms of a lucid interval.

"What a fool I am," said Professor Twitter, winking very hard, "to go on in this way; but never mind," he added, wiping his cheeks with his military cuffs, "I don't have such a treat as this every day in the week—do I, Walter?"

"And what, James, have you been doing," said Walter, "since we last shook hands together?"

"I saw you about a month ago," replied the foster-brother; "but you didn't see me, I calculate."

"Where was that, James?" inquired Walter, with surprise.

"You was walking through a wood over by the ferry yonder, and I was sitting up in a tree, bird-nesting," said James. "I saw you pass along and called out, but you wouldn't hear me; and when I got down you was out of sight. Oh! wasn't I savage with myself for not singing out louder!"

"Did you not hear the report of fire-arms?" asked Walter. "I was waylaid in the forest and shot, by some footpad, at least so I suspect. It must have been within a few minutes after you saw me."

The professor looked at his foster-brother for nearly a minute in silent amazement.

"What!" cried James, "was it *you* that was shot at? Well—I never. Oh! I should know him again amongst a hundred. He was no footpad, Walter; he was a reg'lar gentleman in his appearance—I don't say no further, mind. He was tall—about so high—dressed all in black, and had got a face like a toad's belly. I caught sight of him just after I lost sight of you; he was stooping down behind a bush, loading a pistol—he didn't think I was twigging him. But, lor'! I never dreamt of his shooting at *you*, else wouldn't I have dropped down and got between his legs, and doubled him up like a Robinson Crusoe bedstead!"

Dr. Hedgehog looked gravely at Walter, and observed that this matter ought to be inquired into. Before, however, Walter could express his sentiments with reference to the proposed investigation, his attention was again inundated with the stream of Jemmy Twitter's copious loquacity.

"What's become of old Daddy Brandon?" he

inquired, with an extensive grin upon his original countenance. " He caught hold of me once, Walter ; it was when I was doing the hanky-panky in Charterhouse Square. Oh ! didn't I punish his calves for him not at all ! But then, mind, he aggrawated me most desperate, else I shouldn't have done it—'cause it is cowardly to kick an old fellow what can't help hisself. But he did dance like a wild Irish grasshopper—I never ! "

The professor then proceeded to relate the particulars of a second attempt made by Mr. Brandon to arrest his errant propensities, which took place in Epping Forest, and described the ingenious manner of his escape, namely, by gnawing a hole in the sack in which he was deposited, and jumping out of the covered cart, in which he was being conveyed by Mr. Brandon's paid agents, while those gentlemen were regaling themselves at a hotel by the road side.

Walter was about to question his foster-brother with reference to the assassin, whose description corresponded so closely with that of the person who had falsely assumed the title of Lord Petersham, when Mrs. Devonport entered, and informed her master that the village constables had come to summon the ' young soldier,' as his attendance was required before Justice Cramburn, to give evidence against the prisoners, whose nefarious designs he had so meritoriously defeated.

In order that Professor Twitter might appear in respectable attire at the seat of justice, Dr. Hedgehog directed Mrs. Devonport to supply him with such articles from his wardrobe, as might be requisite to ensure for his testimony their worships' attentive credence, the doctor knowing

how difficult it is for short-sighted humanity to recognise his poor relation Truth, when it has neither shoes nor stockings, by which it may be immediately identified.

As soon as his foster-brother had retired, Walter furnished Dr. Hedgehog with the history of their acquaintance, from which it appeared that James, whom he had every reason to believe was the legitimate son and heir of Lord Petersham, had been committed in his infancy to the care of Walter's parents; that, notwithstanding his youthful appearance, he and Walter were about the same age; that, in consequence of old Brandon's tyrannical government, which after the death of Walter's mother became still more intolerable, both he and James determined upon running away from home; that, in pursuance of this resolution, James, who had always shown an odd propensity for tumbling, &c., proceeded to various wakes and fairs about the country, where for some weeks they picked up a precarious subsistence; but having accidentally got separated, Walter had entirely lost sight of his foster-brother, till accident had brought them together in the singular manner already described.

Jemmy Twitter—for we shall at present retain his popular sobriquet—having after much persuasion, been induced to avail himself of some small contributions from Dr. Hedgehog's wardrobe, proceeded, in company with the physician and his foster-brother, to the seat of Justice Cramburn, where the prisoners, in whose capture he had been so proudly distinguished, were about to undergo examination. As they passed the cage—an octagonal building, with the good old English 'stocks' before its iron-ribbed portal, they beheld a young

woman, standing on a stool at the grated window, with a pewter tankard and a clay pipe, by means of which she was supplying the inmates with liquid refreshment. Pausing to admire this sample of female ingenuity and devotion, Dr. Hedgehog's attention was arrested by the following interesting little piece of dialogue :—

"Sarah," said a rough voice from within ; "go and get us a good strong lawyer."

"But I ain't got no money, Ben," pleaded Sarah, with tears in her eyes.

"Never mind about money," replied Benjamin ; "go to Mr. Inglewood, he never asks for no money—they calls him the 'cadger's lawyer'—he'll give you credit, Sarah, fast enough : tell him to put it up, and we'll settle altogether next time."

Thus entreated, Sarah proceeded to a large house, with poplars before it, opposite the green, which a brass plate informed her was the official abode of 'Mr. Thomas Inglewood, attorney-at-law.' On inquiry, however, of a female servant, Sarah was given to understand that Mr. Inglewood was engaged, and was likely to continue so for an unlimited period ; an assertion which had its desired effect, for the applicant went away, and did not return again. The statement, however, on this particular occasion, happened accidentally to be true in part. Tom was engaged with a voluble lady client, in a brown beaver bonnet, and a plaid cloak, who was somewhat rudely instructing her torpid solicitor in the preparation of a brief, and ever and anon upbraiding him most cruelly for his glaring ignorance and incapacity. It is almost superfluous to state, that this lady was no other than the renowned *Mrs. M'Rowdy*—Tom's oldest, most tenacious, and

most expensive client, who, having made another injudicious display of her native freedom of speech, to the detriment of a neighbour's reputation, had come as usual to Mr. Inglewood, to protect her from the penal consequences of her scandalous behaviour. Having placed Tom at his writing-desk, Mrs. M'Rowdy stood at his elbow, and dictated the arguments which she proposed to employ in her defence.

"I knows for sartin," she said, in a dialect that was neither Irish nor Scotch, but, like the snuff she patronized, a mixture of both,—“I knows for sartin that Mr. Waddilove, who is coming for'ard to bear false witness agin my most respectful client, has committed two murders”—

"Mrs. M'Rowdy!" ejaculated the solicitor, looking up with indignant amazement.

"Hold your whisht," returned Tom's client, irritated at the interruption; "just put it down as I indite you, if you plaize."

"Do you suppose, Mrs. M'Rowdy," exclaimed Tom with firmness, "that I'll accuse a respectable man, like Mr. Churchwarden Waddilove, of having committed two murders?—certainly not."

"Ar'n't you my attorney, ye divil," demanded Mrs. M'Rowdy, giving her solicitor a patronizing slap on the back.

"But that's no reason," expostulated Tom, "why I should tell a pack of falsehoods; and I won't do it, Mrs. M'Rowdy, for you or for anybody else."

"Then ye don't know your business," cried Mrs. M'Rowdy, snapping her finger scornfully; "I'll tell ev'rybody I mate in the strate, that ye don't know your business."

"I don't care if you do," replied Tom, pale but resolute.

"Oh! but I won't stop there," rejoined Mrs. M'Rowdy, jerking her head menacingly; "I'll impaich ye before the Lard High Chancillor, will I—yer ignorant pretinder that ye are."

"Pish!" said Tom, proudly, releasing two buttons of his waistcoat; "what do I care for the Chancellor? I can do without *my* business better than he can do without his—ha!—ha!" and Tom laughed and rubbed his hands in very excellent spirits.

"But you can't do without *my* business," returned Mrs. M'Rowdy, winking her eye knowingly; "you've taken it up, Mr. Attarney Inglewood, and ye shall kape it up, else I'll inter an action agin ye for laches—maybe you don't know what are laches?"

"Don't I," said Tom, knowingly; "I had thirty on at one time, and I sha'n't forget them in a hurry—the little blood-suckers."

Mrs. M'Rowdy regarded her solicitor with an air of severe reproach.

"Look in yer lar dictionary, do," she said, "and don't ixpose yer ignorance, for goodness' sake—not to know what laches are!—laches don't apply to bruises, but to niglignce: and now jist turn ye round, and take arders for your braif;" and once more Mrs. M'Rowdy repeated the calumnious assertion of Mr. Churchwarden Waddilove having committed two wilful murders, and divers other grave offences against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, his crown and dignity.

"I'll not do it," exclaimed Tom, dashing down his pen in disgust, and starting up warm and ready for conflict.

"Then I'll impaich ye," said the amazon, tying the strings of her brown beaver bonnet, with a sanguinary jerk; "I'll impaich ye, as sure as there's a nose on your face."

Tom smiled bitterly, ran his fingers several times through his hair, and resolved to make one more effort to save his reputation.

"Mrs. M'Rowdy," he cried, in a loud and peremptory tone, while not a nerve quivered throughout his stalwart frame, "do you suppose, madam, that I, as an attorney of the court of King's Bench, and solicitor of his Majesty's high court of Chancery, will go and deliberately libel one of my most intimate friends, to please the whims or the malice of one of my most unprofitable clients? No! I'll see one of my clients dash'd first;" and, in his virtuous indignation, Tom struck the desk with his knuckles so energetically, as to overturn the ink-stand, and open a sable sluice upon some of his most valuable papers.

"I tell you, Mrs. M'Rowdy, again, as I've told you before," pursued the solicitor, using his coat-tail in default of blotting-paper, "that I don't want your business at any price. Go to some other attorney—to Grindstone, to Flaywell, to Screwman, to Boltoff, to Bleedam, to Swizzle, to Catspur, or to Cheapasdert—there's hundreds of 'em, no doubt, who'd be proud of you.—I ain't."

"Proud of me!" returned Mrs. M'Rowdy, bridling with true Hibernian dignity and scorn; "ye may say that, because they are gentlemen of sinse, and like to have respectable pable to dale with—not such vulgar riff-raff as many of your clients I have sane, Mr. Inglewood—dirty-looking fellows, whom iv'ry dacent attorney would tread upon as a

mat under their fate." And Mrs. M'Rowdy curled her lip, and its adjacent feature, with affected disdain. "But, howiver," she continued, "considerin' I have known you from a child, in a manner o' spakin', I'll not lave you now, notwithstandin' your ingratitude, for where would you have got all your knowledge of lar from, if it hadn't been for me continually instructin' of you—can you answer me that, Mr. Attorney Inglewood?"

Tom clenched his teeth ; and regarding his client with a most uncharitable expression of countenance, he informed Mrs. M'Rowdy, that if she persisted in her present line of conduct, she would certainly drive him to do something which she would hereafter be sorry for.

"I'll strike myself off the Rolls," said Tom, instinctively turning up his cuffs, as if to prepare himself for action—"I will, as sure as you stand there a living sinner, Mrs. M'Rowdy."

"Strike yourself off the Rolls, will ye?" replied Mrs. M'Rowdy, regarding her solicitor with a shrewd and searching eye. "Take care that I don't strike ye off the Rolls for being ignorant of your business, ye wake-minded young man!" And Mrs. M'Rowdy nodded at Mr. Inglewood in so significant a manner, as to leave no doubt of her strength or her inclination to exercise it, when adequately provoked.

Tom walked up and down the apartment, speechless with ineffectual rage, and bathed in perspiration. His agony was so intense, that it actually operated upon his client's womanly sympathies.

"Now, just sit ye down, ye thoughtless divil—do," said Mrs. M'Rowdy, with a coaxing air. "Why can't you take things aisy? It's no use your fuming and frothing like a barrel of bare in a brewery :

you're an attorney, and ye must put up with it. I want nothin', Mr. Inglewood, but what is reasonable."

"And pray," demanded Tom, forgetting in his excitement how to pronounce his mother-tongue, "what do you call reasonable?"

"Two guineas for counsel, my dear, I must have; and there's no help for it, at all, at all."

Tom drew out his purse, and hastily threw down two sovereigns and two shillings, which Mrs. M'Rowdy duly deposited in her reticule.

"And now," she said, with a winning smile, "I want half-a-crown for the counsellor's clerk—bad luck to him for putting poor paple to sich a dridful expense."

Mr. Inglewood protested, in the strongest terms, that he would not submit to this infamous extortion; and for fear of his resolution failing him, if he longer parleyed with the tempter, Tom rushed precipitately into an inner apartment, and having bolted the door behind him, sank into a chair, with his blood at fever-heat, and completely exhausted by the violence of his emotions.

He had not sat long, however, before he heard the angry voice of Mrs. M'Rowdy demanding admittance; which demand Tom was bent within himself upon resisting, at all hazards. Finding her denunciations useless, Mrs. M'Rowdy changed her tone, and endeavoured to accomplish her object by cajolery; and faintly pleading that she was seized with a fit of the spasms, entreated her solicitor, as 'a darlin', to supply her with a small medicinal glass of brandy. Notwithstanding, however, that Tom was one of the most tender-hearted creatures breathing, when feminine appeals were made to his

humanity—a fact of which Mrs. M'Rowdy was perfectly cognisant—on this occasion Tom was inexorable, and plainly told the petitioner, that he considered it was quite enough for him as a solicitor to redress people's wrongs, but that he had no idea of being called upon also to cure their spasms. Incensed at this brutal disregard of her 'failings,' Mrs. M'Rowdy began to rattle the door, with a view of effecting an entrance *vi et armis*—in which illegal procedure she ultimately succeeded, just as Tom rushed out into the back-yard, and vaulting over the palings, proceeded with a quick step towards the market-place; which he had just entered, when Mrs. M'Rowdy, in a state of broiling excitement, bore down upon him, and opened a battery of scurrilous epithets that, despite of all Tom's conscious innocence, caused him to tingle from head to foot. Nor did Mrs. M'Rowdy long stand alone in this exterminating warfare. With its wonted gallantry, a thoroughly independent mob rushed to her assistance; and believing, as Mrs. M'Rowdy vehemently asserted, that Tom had been taking an unfair advantage of a 'defenceless female,' lost no time in supplying themselves with cabbage-stalks, and other offensive missiles, which they showered so impetuously at the head of the rural solicitor, that Tom was obliged to fight his way through them blindfolded; and but for the opportune interposition of the street-keeper with his staff of office, at whose advent the insurgents took to flight, there is no telling whether Mr. Inglewood might not have fallen there and then, the bespattered victim of a miserable popular delusion. Fortune, however, was pleased to regulate it otherwise, and ordain that he should become a martyr, not to the

insatiable cupidity of Mrs. M'Rowdy, but to the love-inspiring smiles of Laura Bloomsbury, as will be seen hereafter.

Upon hearing the biographical statement of his foster-brother, with which Walter Brandon had furnished him, Dr. Hedgehog recommended that no time should be lost in communicating with the Linford family, by whom measures might be taken to place the heir to the Petersham estates in a position more consistent with his noble extraction, than that which, knowing his erratic tendencies, Walter feared he was strongly inclined to retain. Under these circumstances, it was arranged that, as soon as James could be supplied with proper equipments, Dr. Hedgehog and Walter should prevail upon him to accompany them to the residence of Lord Clarence Linford, under pretence of his lordship being desirous to witness his performance—a proposition which afforded the professor great delight, and induced him to practise for two days with unusual energy, in order to show himself worthy of that exalted patronage, which of course it was his highest ambition to merit and secure.

CHAPTER XVII.

A king belov'd—he ruled on ev'ry stand,
 From proud Cornhill to gay and glittering Strand;
 Though firm enthron'd, he still the checks obey'd
 Of public right, which nobler thrones have sway'd;
 All ranks received him, and all hearts confest
 His reign was glorious, and his race was blest.

THE JARVIAD.

“WHAT *is* the matter with you to-night, Joe?—you look as queer as Dick’s hat-band; neither eating, nor drinking, nor doing nothing at all—never see such a man—never.”

This earnest inquiry, and graphic delineation of character, was addressed by Mrs. West. to her thoughtful consort, as they sat at a supper of sheeps-heads, a delicacy to which Mrs. West. was particularly devoted.

The old coachman laid down his knife and fork, and sighed.

“And then there’s that dog; I can’t conceive for the life of me what ails *him*,” observed Mrs. West. looking at Scroggy, who was wrapped in uneasy dreams on the hearth-rug.

“You may depend,” replied Mr. West., after due consideration of the phenomenon—“you may depend, Betsy, that he smells these here heads in his imagination, and fancies that he’s in Hosier Lane, with his old master, crying out ‘fore ’em!’”

Mrs. West. looked steadfastly at her liege lord, to

ascertain if he was joking, but not perceiving any signs of jocularitv in his countenance, she at once banished suspicion, and candidly acknowledged that she supposed it must be so.

"It's five year ago this blessed night, Betsy," said Mr. West., brooding sorrowfully over his top-boot, "since my poor Freddy lost his life along with those smugglers."

Mrs. West., though she had heard the particulars repeatedly since her marriage, if not before, had never yet been able to arrive at a perfect understanding of the calamity to which Joseph so frequently referred. Taking compassion on her tardy apprehension, therefore, Mr. West. once more entered into a minute account of the occurrence, which our limited space compels us to omit. The pith, however, of his narrative was simply this:—Some smugglers, who had been taken in the act of 'running' sundry casks of brandy, were, to expiate their offence against his Majesty's customs, sent on board of a line-of-battle ship, in which Frederick West., a young man of smart appearance and active habits, was rated, to use old Joseph's boastful designation, 'captain of the main top.' One night the prisoners concerted a plan for their escape; and, having surprised and secured the men on watch, amongst whom was Frederick West., they succeeded in getting away in the pinnace, but not before the young sailor, while attempting to capture them, fell overboard, and, never having appeared again, was supposed by his shipmates to have been drowned, in which belief poor old Joe West. fondly and proudly participated. "My boy died in the hour of victory, like Lord Nelson," he would say, with a melancholy satisfaction in his swimming

eyes; "and he's gone to heaven, as every good man must, what does, as he did, his duty to his suv'reign and his country."

Joe West. had just finished his sorrowful tale, and was adding a few appropriate reflections, when the entrance of his friend and fellow-tradesman, Mr. Bodger, diverted his thoughts into a different and more terrestrial channel.

"There's Fleet Street blocked up agin," complained Mr. Bodger, sitting down and placing on the carpet his hat, which was decorated with a chaplet of straw.

"Mare, as usual, I suppose?" said Joe, offering Mr. Bodger a foaming tankard, from which he gratefully refreshed himself.

"None but a Mare durst do it," returned Bodger, delivering the fermented fluid to Mrs. West., who returned her polite acknowledgments; "and he's continually at it; and, what's more than that, ma'm, the meteriopolitan magistracy, to which we naturally turns for protection in sich cases, will *not* interfere to prewent his doing o' mischief—ar'n't it a extraordinary thing?"

"Why don't they petition Parli'ment?" said Mr. West., as he watched with interest the attempts of Mrs. West.'s kitten to awaken Scroggy, by playfully clawing at one of his ears.

"It's no use petitioning," replied Bodger, with marked disgust. "What chance would Parli'ment stand agin a Mare? I have my ideas, ma'm, what it'll come to—a riverlution, unless they could manage to smuggle the Mare aboard one of them Boulogne packets, so as to carry him off as a prize for the Johnny Darneys. Summut strong must *be done*, and quickly too. What I propose is, that

we march down to the 'Mansion,' with our whips, in a body, *we-at-armsis*, and let the civics know that we will *not* be trampled upon by a Mare, at no price—we won't. Why, bless my soul!" said Mr. Bodger, with a stare of horror, "if they drives on this rate, in a wery few years you'll see all the city, from the 'Change' to the 'Bar,' dug up and kivered with taters."

Startled at this prophetic announcement, which had a direct bearing on the domestic economy, Mrs. West. turned to Mr. Bodger, and innocently asked him if it would make any difference in the price of that nutritious esculent; a question to which Mr. Bodger, in the lofty supremacy of his wisdom, deigned no reply, but evaded it by addressing Joseph, and asking him if he had seen the 'Tizer?'

† "There's a article which I think will interest you," said Mr. Bodger, handing the paper to his host, and directing his attention to a paragraph which stated that, on the previous day, as a party, consisting of Captain Hippesley; Mr. Thomas Inglewood, a highly respectable solicitor; the sister of that gentleman, Mrs. Charlotte Stanley; and her daughter, a little girl of four years of age, were proceeding in a sailing-boat round the Isle of Wight, the child, by some accident, fell overboard, and must have been drowned, but for the intrepidity of a young man, named Frederick Westminster, one of the crew of a yacht belonging to Mr. Marmaduke Brandon, who gallantly plunged into the water, and with much difficulty succeeded in rescuing the child, and restoring it to its terrified parent, happily before the vital spark had fled!

Mr. West. read the paragraph over three times

with great deliberation, and was apparently, by the motion of his lips, about perusing it again, when the paper gradually fell from his hands, and as if his faculties had suddenly deserted him, he remained for some minutes gazing vacantly on the ground. Mrs. West. spoke to him tenderly, but he made no answer. At length his whole frame seemed agitated by some violent emotion which he could no longer suppress, and the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks upon poor Scroggy, who, moved by his master's grief, had dolefully laid his head upon the old man's knee.

"Upon my word!" said Mrs. West., as soon as her astonishment could find adequate vent in words, "if you ain't the oddest man I ever came anigh. When you thought your son was gone for ever and ever, you seemed quite comfortable; now you find that he's come to life again, drat me if you ain't miserable. Such behaviour as that, in *my* opinion—which of course, coming from a woman, goes for nothing—is not only ungrateful, but wicked. What think you, Mr. Bodger?"

Bodger took out his tobacco-pouch, and filling an abridged pipe which he extracted from his hat, said he considered that was a question more fit for a bishop to answer than a coachman. 'For his own part he never had had nothin' to do with wickedness, and never wished to.'

"If, Betsy," said Mr. West., addressing his better portion—"if Freddy had died in defending of his king and country, though maybe I should have wept for him as a father, I should have known that he'd done his duty, and that would have been a consolation to me—a wery great consolation; but to think, after the edication he's re-

ceived—for he couldn't only read and write and cast accounts, but he had a very pretty knowledge of navigation—to think, after having got him into his Majesty's Ryal Navy, and after he'd come to be captain of the main-tops, that he should suffer an unprincipled gang of smugglers to inweigle him away from his allegations to his king and his country——” The poor old gentleman paused, and overcome by the reflection of his son's degradation, shook his head at Scroggy, and sighed heavily.

“As for his allegations to his king and his country,” replied Mrs. West., whose loyalty was inferior, both in quality and amount, to that of her consort, “I'll be bound that his king and his country will be very glad of his services again, if he only takes the trouble to ask 'em.”

Joe pondered for some minutes over this happy suggestion, which reflected so much credit on feminine sagacity, and at length intimated his determination to act upon it. Accordingly, the next morning saw Mr. West., in his best broad-brimmed beaver and highly polished top-boots, trudging along Whitehall, and meditating deeply upon his forthcoming application on behalf of his misguided son, Frederick.

“Can I see the First Lord of the Admiralty?” said Joe, addressing the corpulent hall-porter, who wore a cockade on his glazed leather hat.

Mr. West. received a short answer in the negative.

“Can I see the second, then?” inquired the old coachman; but this inspection was also pronounced to be a moral, or more properly speaking, a naval impossibility.

The third, fourth, and fifth lords, Mr. West.

learned, to his extreme disappointment, were equally unprepared for ocular examination.

"Which one of 'em is wisible, governor?" asked Mr. West. — "say No. 40, if you like, I ain't particular to a figure."

The hall-porter, whose official position prevented him from taking cognizance of anything verging upon facetiæ, told Mr. West., with some display of asperity, that if he wanted to see the secretary, he ought to say so at once, and not come there putting a parcel of nonsensical questions, which only showed his ignorance; whereupon Mr. West. humbly apologized to the man with a patent ventilator on his hat, and assured him that he should deem it a particular favour, if he would allow him to have a few minutes' conversation with his honourable master.

Introduced to the secretary, old Joe pleaded his cause with so much natural eloquence, and professed so warm an attachment to his Sovereign and his dominions, in defence of which he expressed (on behalf of himself and son) a cheerful readiness, to lay down their united lives, on demand, that the secretary, who at first looked grave, and could not "think of such a thing," was ultimately induced to smile, and promise that he would consider of it. This was all Joe wanted, but not less than he had anticipated. Within forty-eight hours after this interview, Frederick Westminster, released from the toils of that wily old smuggler, Mr. Marmaduke Brandon, was rated first-class seaman on board H. M. S. 'War-whoop,' 120 guns, and straightway joined the fleet, sent out to vindicate the rights of the Sublime Porte, in effecting which object the captain of the fore-


top, with his shirt sleeves tucked up, fought like a lion beside his gallant commander, at the redoubted siege of St. Jean d'Acre.

It was a sunny afternoon in August. Old Joe Westminster had just received intelligence that filled his paternal heart with balmy joy. A glorious victory had been gained over the enemy by his son Freddy (aided, we presume, by a few of his shipmates), and his gallantry and good conduct had secured for him immediate promotion. The old gentleman felt that his cup of earthly bliss was full, and that whenever his time came, he should now die happy. Released from the cares of business—for nobody dreamed of riding in those sultry days, with the thermometer at Bengal-heat—old Joe sat on his coach-box, the first in the rank, his hands clasped before him, and dozing with a tranquillity, envied only by the pragmatical blue bottle that buzzed about his exuberant nose. Nor was Joe the only individual whom the fervid rays of summer, had prematurely sent to repose. His anatomical horses—sensible creatures spoiled by over-indulgence—were nodding with as little thought of what to-morrow might bring forth, as their master, and even old Scroggy, the superannuated drover's dog, stretched at length on the curbstone, with his eyes closed and his tongue indolently lolling out, was brooding over those sweet reminiscences, when in his hot youth he chased some rebellious wether along the sinuous lane of Hosier, or across the salubrious field of Smith. Seated on the bars at the back of his coach, five ragged and ravenous urchins, friends of Mr. West's, and dependants upon his never-failing hospitality, were regaling themselves

upon certain fragmentary donations, which they had just received from their great benefactor. There was a charm about this picture of still life, which fascinated even the misanthropic leaden-eyed waterman, who, as he leaned against an adjacent lamp-post, and regarded old Mr. West's benevolent and ruddy countenance, smote himself in an imaginary manner upon the breast, and grieved to think that had he only cultivated his manners and personal appearance a little more, he might ere now have married the widow of some deceased coachman, and become a respectable proprietor himself.

Suddenly, and while these unavailing regrets were wringing the waterman's bosom, he observed a change take place in old Joe's aspect. A tremor seized him, his colour from bright scarlet became livid, and though his eyes were open and upturned, he was evidently in a state of partial unconsciousness. By this time a crowd had collected round the coach, who unanimously affirmed that poor Joe was in a fit, and though all expressed their sympathy for the old gentleman, whose virtues had gained him universal respect, yet by none was it more strongly displayed, than by old purblind Scroggy, who, jumping up on the box, and placing his fore paws on his master's shoulders, began licking his face with a fondness characteristic of the shepherd's faithful, but roughly-treated messenger.

With some difficulty, poor Mr. West. was removed from his box to a neighbouring chemist's, where he heaved but one sigh before he breathed his last. The juvenile wanderers of London, whom he had so long nourished and educated, went into



real spiritual mourning when they heard of old Joe's death, and the day of his funeral was observed by them literally as a day of fasting, which, however, in many cases, was not less a token of respect than a matter of necessity. Such was the euthanasia of old Joe Westminster, the last of the ancient *régime* of hackney coachmen—rest to his horses!—peace to his manes!



CHAPTER XVIII.

Gone are those fairy barques that sped
 So joyous o'er the Ocean's bed;
 No stars their silent vigils keep,
 No moon beams on the clouded deep;
 No light above, no rest below,
 Like dreams of love that end in woe.

WRECK OF THE HEART.

THOUGH Mr. Brandon had experienced a severe disappointment, he had not sustained a perfect defeat. Had he been able to prevail upon his son Walter, to secure the hand of Miss Shuttleworth, by personating Lord Petersham, and have also succeeded in arresting the real heir to that title, to hold as it were *in terrorem* over the Linford family, his feelings of parental tenderness would have been gratified, and his urgent necessity for some three or four thousand pounds most conveniently supplied. Failing, however, in both these speculations, he was fain to accede to an arrangement proposed by Staunton, who still retained those important documents which gave so much specious support to his

pretensions. In pursuance of this arrangement, Staunton wrote to Lord Clarence Linford, stating his recent arrival in England, and his intention to wait upon his lordship at his residence in Eaton Square, at a certain hour on the following day ; at which time, Staunton was ushered into a spacious library, where Lord Clarence presently made his appearance.

The amiable and unhappy lover of Helen Bloomsbury, was apparently between four and five and twenty years of age. His slender but graceful figure was wrapt in a robe of black velvet, secured by a girdle of thread-gold. Pale, and with features finely chiselled as a piece of sculpture, there was a tenderness in his large dark eyes, and an elegance in the ringlets black as the raven's wing, which fell in clusters round his alabaster throat, that but few could completely admire, and none entirely despise. How like and yet unlike was Clarence to Helen Bloomsbury ! The spirit of each resembled a lake embosomed in romantic beauty :—one reflecting night, with its chastened melancholy, its sighings, and its stars ; the other distorting its own loveliness, and inspiring terror, by its vivid illustrations of a flashing and a clouded heaven.

Approaching Staunton, who rose at his entrance, he said :—" I have considered the purport of your letter, and perhaps you would do me the favour to wait upon my solicitors, whose names you will find upon that card, and who will give your application their best attention."

" So, my lord," replied Staunton, and his brow darkened with scorn, " you mean to exercise the privilege of your order, by voting against me by

proxy; and not being prepared to convince me of my error in person, you think to accomplish your object by handing me over to the harpies of the law. You presume upon my want of resources—a safe presumption, my lord, and one eminently worthy of so distinguished a philanthropist.”

“You do me great injustice, if you think I wish to thwart you in any way,” said Lord Linford, in a mild conciliating tone, that contrasted forcibly with the studied insolence of the person who had just addressed him. “Were I to consult my own feelings in this matter, I should waive all inquiry into your claims, which I believe to be well founded, and which I’m sure, on the part of our family, will meet with no vexatious opposition, but merely a fair and liberal investigation.”

“Whatever opposition I may encounter shall come from you, my lord, and you alone,” returned Staunton, folding his arms, and regarding the young nobleman with a menacing expression. “I’ll hold no communication with your solicitors, nor shall you screen yourself behind those legal barriers, upon whose protection you so confidently rely. In defiance of your wealth, your connexions, and your influence, I will drag you forth to the light of day, strip you of that flimsy reputation which you so highly value, and exhibit you to the world as another splendid example, of the robber assuming the humility of the priest.”

Lord Linford, who had been pacing the apartment while Staunton was addressing him, paused as he concluded, and a slight flush mantled his cheek. It almost instantly disappeared, however,

and, resuming that calm demeanour which seemed proof against all provocation, he said,—“ You do not know me, or you would at once dismiss from your breast such ungenerous suspicions.”

“ Be not so sure of that, my lord,” returned Staunton; “ the cloak of a pseudo-philanthropist is much too threadbare to impose upon any man of average discernment. I know you, my lord, and intend to cultivate that knowledge by incessant application to the subject of it.”

“ Surely, you cannot mean to destroy me,” said Clarence, regarding his opponent with an air of intense apprehension; “ and yet you do so, for this excitement is more than I am able to sustain.” And, sinking into a chair, he pressed his hand on his heart, and remained for some moments in a state of such complete prostration, as might have convinced any unprejudiced observer of his sincerity.

“ You act this well, my lord,” said Staunton, with a sneer on his sardonic countenance. “ I have heard already of your histrionic achievements at Talma Castle; but however successful your lordship’s performances may be, in the opinion of a certain coterie, when you are acting, my lord, as you are now doing, purely for your own benefit, you must not be surprised if less partial judges should criticize your impersonations with somewhat greater severity.”

Clarence waved his hand, while his features assumed an expression of almost agonising deprecation. The mention of Talma Castle had revived in his bosom those pangs, with which the remembrance of Helen Bloomsbury was inseparably associated.

He had scarcely recovered his composure when a hackney chariot drove up, and presently a portly gentleman with a bald head, dark bushy whiskers, black silk stockings, and silver knee-buckles, was ushered into his lordship's presence.

"My name, my lord," said the stranger, with a courtier-like obeisance, "is Brandon, of Gosport, county Hants, of whom you have doubtless heard from my noble friend here—Lord Petersham. I had the honour, my lord, of rearing, clothing, and educating this distinguished scion of your lordship's illustrious house. At an early age—a very early age—he was committed to the — you understand? of my wife—exactly so."

Lord Linford looked up at Staunton with an air of earnest entreaty, and said, "Will you oblige me by calling upon those gentlemen (pointing to the card which lay on the table); if you are not satisfied with their proceedings, see me again."

"My resolution is taken, my lord," replied Staunton, coolly walking away, "and nothing on earth shall induce me to alter it."

Mr. Brandon, who had listened attentively to this brief dialogue, now ventured to offer his friendly counsel.

"Is your lordship aware," he asked, "of the enormous expense of taking legal measures? I venture to think not; and your lordship will be pleased to bear in mind that my noble friend here is not in a position—cannot possibly be in a position—to obtain professional assistance, after having been so long kept out of his inheritance. Oh! dear no—it's quite unreasonable to expect such a thing, my lord."

"What amount do you require?" said Clarence, addressing Staunton, for in Mr. Brandon's deport-

ment and manner there was a pompous vulgarity which the young nobleman found extremely repulsive.

"Well, I should say," replied Mr. Brandon, looking inquiringly at Staunton, who seemed wrapt in his moody reflections, "in round numbers, three thousand pounds."

"I cannot furnish you with so large a sum as that," said Lord Linford, still addressing Staunton; "but to convince you that I am desirous of doing justice, I will give you a draft on my bankers for three hundred pounds, which will at least enable you to take the preliminary steps in asserting those claims which, as I stated before, when fairly proved, will, on my part, meet with a ready and willing recognition."

So saying, Clarence opened an elegant *escritoir*, and, having filled up a cheque for the sum specified, was about to deliver it to Staunton, when his hand and his purpose were alike arrested by the dowager-countess, whose sudden entrance, and imperious demeanour, at once extinguished all Mr. Brandon's hopes of realizing a golden harvest from the field, of which he had just completed a most satisfactory mental survey.

"Who are these people?" demanded the countess, addressing her step-son. Clarence explained.

"That man," returned the countess, pointing at Staunton, "I know to be a convicted felon; he was tried for murder at Brussels. I was in the court-house, and remember his face distinctly."

Staunton's penetrating eye glittered for a moment with suppressed rage. He still, however, retained his self-possession, and said, in a tone of deliberate sarcasm, "If I am what you represent, madam, you

will have the pleasure of reflecting, that the person whom you have stigmatized as a convicted felon, bears the honoured name of — Petersham."

■ The countess made no reply, but rang the bell, and directed the servant who obeyed its summons, to show 'those people' out immediately.

■ The lackey looked alternately at Staunton and Brandon, and threw the door wide open, as if to facilitate their egress, while Clarence mildly expostulated with his haughty step-mother; but the countess was inexorable.

"Am I obeyed?" she cried, as two additional footmen presented themselves in the hall; "remove those persons this instant;" and without uttering another word, she retired, leaving the menials to execute her peremptory mandate.

The three stately and powdered servitors advanced three steps, and might have advanced three more, had not Staunton, suddenly clenching his hand, saved them the trouble, by moving forward, and causing the crimson-coated personages before him to fall back with respectful alacrity.

"Dare one of you," he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "to touch me with a finger, and by the heavens above, I'll dash his brains out against that wall. My lord," he continued, addressing Clarence, who reclined in his *fauteruil* as haggard and as pale as death, "I hold you responsible for these insults. You shall hear from me again;" and requesting Brandon to accompany him, Staunton, his countenance inflamed with passion, was about to quit the apartment, when a second hackney-chariot drove up beside that which was still in waiting, and on whose box sat Mr. Bodger, gloomily brooding over the eruptions of Fleet Street.

The chariot contained Dr. Hedgehog, Walter Brandon, and their interesting charge, the true Lord Petersham, who, in his costume of a civilian, had undergone so wonderful a metamorphosis, that Mr. Bodger scarcely knew him again.

The appearance of these gentlemen on the scene of action created a sensation, both in the mind of Staunton and his accomplice, that no words of which our limited space admits would adequately describe.

Before Dr. Hedgehog had found an opportunity of introducing the object of his visit to Lord Linford, all eyes were fixed upon that nobleman's eccentric relative, the improvisatore, who, regarding Staunton with an expression of the wildest astonishment and abhorrence, proclaimed him to be the man who had attempted the assassination of his foster-brother.

With this announcement, which filled all present with emotions that rendered them incapable of action, the boy was about to spring upon the alleged assassin, when Walter and Dr. Hedgehog interfered, and a desperate struggle ensued; for, notwithstanding his stunted form, the boy had immense muscular power, and strove with all his might to disengage himself from those who held him, till Staunton had withdrawn, when, like some wild animal whose uncontrollable fury is excited by the presence of an obnoxious object, and can only be pacified by its removal, he became so perfectly tranquil, that the doctor and Walter at once relaxed their grasp; but no sooner did the boy find himself at liberty than he darted down stairs, and rushing out into the square, before Bodger or his fellow-coachman could set their cattle in motion to overtake him, he was

fairly out of sight, and beyond all hopes of present recovery.

It was about a week after the interview between Staunton and Lord Clarence Linford, that the former was riding on horseback through the pleasant suburban village of Edmonton. The day was drawing to a close, and some scattered clouds, which had hitherto only served to temper the rays of the sun, and distribute fugitive shadows over the pastoral landscape, now began to collect in gloomy masses, portending the approach of a storm. The wind also, which had since morning lain dormant, gave signs of returning animation, as it whirled up the dust of the Macadamised road along which troops of laughing lads and lasses, dressed in their holiday attire, were hurriedly directing their steps towards the fair, which was held in a spacious meadow abutting upon the highway, and which consequently could be seen by travellers, who might have no inclination to mingle with the motley multitude who honoured it with their more immediate support. Impelled by a curiosity which was somewhat at variance with his supercilious contempt of sports and pastimes generally, and the coarse indulgences of the 'rabble,' as he termed them, in particular, Staunton drew his rein, and paused to contemplate the performances on the external platform of a booth, where sundry grotesque Mimes were provoking the boisterous laughter of a rustic audience by their practical jokes and facial disfigurements. Amongst the proud and tinselled heroes of the sock and buskin who promenaded upon the platform, or pausing, regarded the inferior mortals beneath them with folded arms and melodramatic independence, was one, a youth of lithe and supple

form, in the garb of a Moor—his sable visage, arms, and legs, being relieved by a snow-white turban, a row of blue beads on either wrist, and slippers of scarlet morocco. He had just finished some violent outrage on the dignity of human nature—such as hopping on his hands, with his head curiously tucked between them, spinning on one leg, with its fellow affectionately entwined round his neck, &c.—when, approaching the corner of the show, where a blue-eyed fairy, with gauze wings and a silver wand, was hastily expressing between her lips the juicy contents of a China orange, his attention was suddenly arrested by Staunton; to whose astonishment, the young Moor, jumping from the platform, rushed forward, and making a spring at his collar, endeavoured to pull him from his saddle. Despite of his blackened face and Moorish costume, Staunton recognised him immediately as the boy who had assailed him at Lord Linford's; and who, finding his efforts to unseat Staunton unsuccessful, made an energetic appeal to the crowd, which had gathered round, to assist him in securing one whom he denounced as a murderer! Incensed to a degree bordering on madness at this interruption, Staunton applied his spurs to the flanks of his horse, who, alarmed by the growing disturbance, reared up; when the young Moor suddenly flung his arms round the animal's neck, and held on, while he urged the spectators with all the vehemence he could command to take the assassin into custody. The rencontre now became terrific; the horse rearing and plunging in a manner that threatened instantaneous destruction to the reckless youth, who had now thrown his legs forward so as more effectually to support himself, and prevent Staunton from making his escape.

Once, twice, thrice, Staunton, his eyes glaring with diabolical ferocity, rose in the stirrups, and with the butt-end of his riding-whip struck furiously at his antagonist, who as often adroitly evaded the blow that, had it taken effect on his head, at which it was levelled, must have killed him on the spot. Extraordinary, however, as were the boy's courage and self-possession, the contest was too unequal to render its issue long doubtful. Rising once more in the stirrups, and leaning forward till he could obtain a perfect view of his opponent, Staunton dealt a blow whose murderous consequences were soon too clearly apparent. The boy partly relaxed his hold, and falling back, remained suspended only by his lower extremities, as if even death could not conquer his resolution to bring to condign punishment the ruffian, who had attempted the assassination of his foster-brother. This, however, lasted but for a few moments. He gradually sank to the ground; while a gentleman, springing from a travelling-chariot with four horses, which had just come up, pushed his way through the terrified crowd, among which were several characters in fancy costume, and directed medical assistance to be immediately obtained. It was useless: a surgeon, who happened to be passing, pointed to the blood-drops on the sufferer's forehead, and at once pronounced life to be extinct. So perished the poor inoffensive 'professor' of an humble but popular art—the ill-fated, and last surviving representative of the noble house of Petersham.

In the mean time Staunton, released from the obstruction by which he had been so long detained, dashed forwards, and, notwithstanding a host of hands were raised, and voices too, to check his pro-

gress, he forced a passage through the indignant crowd, and galloped along the road towards St. Albans, at a pace which precluded all hope of stopping him, though followed by several men on horseback, who were returning from a neighbouring cattle market, and who, losing sight of the assassin at a junction of four cross-roads, vainly attempted to renew the pursuit, though the turnpike keeper pointed out to them the direction he had taken, and which was apparent from the deep indentations which the hoofs of his fiercely-ridden horse had left behind him.

The gentleman who sprang out of the travelling chariot, and who was smartly dressed in a bright blue coat, and lemon kid gloves, was our rural solicitor, Tom Inglewood ; and one of the two ladies, who sat beside him, in a white drawn-silk bonnet, with a bouquet in her hand, had that morning, at Mr. Inglewood's urgent request, and more from a desire to show her high appreciation of Tom's multifarious merits, than from any other motive, resigned for ever the appellative distinction by which she had so long been known to fame, of—Laura Bloomsbury.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Thrice arm'd is he who bath his quarrel just,
 His buckler firm, his blade secure from rust;
 While he whose conscience dreads th' approach of light
 Is wing'd alone for prompt and vigorous flight.

OLD PLAY.

A glass lanthorn, suspended by a brass chain in the cabin roof of the '*Abraham Newland*,' cast unsteady light upon the pale and thoughtful faces of two persons who were conversing beneath

One of these persons, whose saturnine countenance was shaded by his hat being drawn over his eyes, was Archibald Staunton, who, with his ample cloak thrown slantingly over his shoulder, regarded *vis-à-vis* with an expression of contemptuous glance, which, rendered into the vernacular tongue, would read thus:—"I know you are a very honourable and well-meaning old gentleman, and would betray a friend to make a fortune. However, I should be sorry to put your virtue to too severe a test, and as I have the reins of power in my own hands, I think it prudent to keep you under my own immediate observation."

In addition to Staunton and the respected owner of the '*Abraham Newland*,' there was a third individual in the state-room; a gentleman with light breeches and a frilled shirt, who lay stretched in easy slumber upon a horse-hair couch, and whose

slackened neckcloth, and the general negligence of his apparel, proclaimed him to be a vanquished warrior, who had fallen beneath the vinous assaults of the jolly and triumphant Bacchus.

"Who is this gent you've brought on board with you?" said Mr. Brandon, glancing anxiously at the tired toper, who, having partaken too freely of his cogniac, had now taken spontaneous occupation of his couch.

"A friend of mine," replied Staunton, "who has some business in Jersey."

"And none in England," rejoined Mr. Brandon, with a suggestive wink of his eye.

Staunton returned no answer to this insinuation; and Brandon, perceiving that the subject was an unpleasant one, considerably dropped it, and proceeded to talk upon matters in which he was more particularly interested.

"Ah!" he said, with a long-drawn sigh, "if I could only lay hold of that young vagabond, it would be a clear five hundred or more in my pocket to-morrow."

Staunton requested him to explain.

"Explain!" cried Mr. Brandon. "Why, don't you suppose that the Linford family would be glad to give me double that sum to keep quiet possession of the boy, while they kept quiet possession of his property?"

"Possible," said Staunton, improving his nails with his pen-knife.

"Possible?" returned Mr. Brandon. "It's more than possible—they couldn't help it; and I'll have him yet. Those stupid dogs, Hawley and Naggle, caught him, as nicely as could be, in Epping Forest; but on their way down to Dagen-

ham, where I had fitted up a cellar purposely for him, hang me if they didn't allow him to escape! I never was more mortified in my life — never. But, however, we'll make better arrangements next time."

"Are you quite sure that he is living?" said Staunton; and his flashing eye was raised for an instant to meet that of his associate.

"Living?" cried Brandon, with terrible hesitation. "Why, surely, you don't mean to tell me that he is not?"

Staunton drew from his pocket a printed paper, and desired his host to read it. It was a placard, offering a reward of two hundred pounds for the apprehension of the murderer of James Twitter, otherwise Lord Petersham.

Brandon looked at the bill, and then at his visitor, as if he could not give credence to his eyesight.

"And you have killed him," he exclaimed, his features oscillating, as it were, in their expression, between the intensest emotions of indignation and horror.

"I finished what you commenced some years ago, and what you doubtless meditated completing in a few months to come; with this difference," added Staunton, "that he met with a quick death instead of a lingering one."

"What do you mean?" cried Brandon, with increasing excitement.

"Starvation," replied Staunton, closing his pen-knife, and quietly returning it to his waistcoat pocket.

The discomfited old smuggler clasped his own throat with his finger and thumb, as if he expe-

rienced a sensation of choking, then made an effort to rise, but Staunton anticipated him.

"Keep your seat," said Staunton. "There's no occasion for you to retire. I've got my eye on the compass. We are steering quite right for the port I wish to make."

"Won't you allow me to go on deck?" demanded Brandon, in a tone of alarm.

"No," replied Staunton, standing up and throwing off his cloak.

There was a pause. Brandon breathed heavily. The silence was broken by his jailer.

"Listen to me," said Staunton; "you would like to secure the two hundred pounds offered for my apprehension?"

"No,—on my honour,—as a gent," exclaimed Brandon eagerly, and striking his hand upon his heart.

"Hush!" said Staunton, with affected alarm; "you'll frighten my friend here. You've agreed," he continued, with low, but very intelligible enunciation, "to land us at St. Malo—do so, and I'll guarantee that you shall receive on our arrival twenty pounds down—stop, hear me out. If you attempt to leave this cabin before we reach there, I'll shoot you where you are sitting, and take the yacht under my own command—be silent—I know personally every one of your men—I've only got to hold up my finger, and the thing's done."

Distracted by a thousand terrors, Brandon shook his outstretched hand, but could do no more.

"A mop and a pail of water," pursued Staunton, with malignant complacency, "will remove all traces of your existence here—the bottom of the

sea will provide for the repose of your body hereafter. Now you may speak as much as you please."

Instead, however, of availing himself of this colloquial licence, Mr. Brandon sank back exhausted, with his large eyes fixed upon the wretch before him, in a magical state of petrification. When some few minutes, however, had elapsed, he regained sufficient strength to give expression to his feelings in a gasping soliloquy, commencing and ending with the exclamation of "What horrid perfidy!"

He had scarcely raised, however, this safety-valve of emotion, when he was startled by shouts from above, followed by the hurried tread of feet on deck, and a sudden lurching of the yacht to leeward, which caused his guest on the couch to roll off with such violence as to elicit from him an unconscious groan, but without offering any interruption to his visions of bliss.

Snatching up a night-glass, Staunton opened one of the cabin windows, and looking forth, discovered at about half a mile distant astern, a sloop, in which were eight or ten men armed with cutlasses, which, sparkling in the moonlight, proclaimed the hostile intentions of those who bore them.

"They are no friends of mine," observed Staunton, laying down the telescope; "it's a revenue boat—so, take care of your tobacco."

"We shall all suffer," said Brandon, looking at his informant with evident uneasiness; "all on board—share and share alike."

Staunton observed that he was quite prepared, and drawing from beneath his cloak a double-barrelled pistol, was proceeding to adjust the flint

and trigger, when a report was heard, and a bullet which had entered at the cabin window, whistled past his ear, and striking a mirror behind him, shattered it into a thousand fragments.

The owner of the '*Abraham Newland*' stood aghast, as he beheld his pier-glass irreparably damaged, and himself saved by a miracle, from being shot dead on the spot. There was no time to lose, however, so rushing up on deck, he gave peremptory orders for crowding all the sail that his vessel could safely carry. The result was, that notwithstanding the superior lightness of her rival, the '*Abraham Newland*' went so rapidly ahead, that the sloop presently appeared but a mere speck in the offing, and her crew, as they waved their glancing weapons athwart the broad disk of the moon, which was slowly sinking in the dusky horizon, looked like so many puny phantoms, waging presumptuous war against the clouds.

† Congratulating himself in having thus cleverly baffled his pursuers, Mr. Brandon returned to his state-room to commune with his equivocal passengers, but was suddenly recalled to his former position by a terrific cry of 'breakers a-head,' which had scarcely subsided, ere the yacht struck on a reef, and instantly a rush of water through the aperture in her bows, flooded the cabin knee-deep. With some difficulty Brandon regained the deck, followed by Staunton, and urged his men to exert themselves for the preservation of his vessel; but, acting in obedience to nature's most potent impulse, the men were too busily employed in lowering the life-boats at the stern and quarter, to comply with their commander's injunctions. Perceiving there was no chance of saving the

yacht, Brandon hastily equipped himself in a patent cork life-preserver, which he always kept in readiness for such contingencies, and returned on deck only to find that he and his yacht were utterly deserted, the boats having put off from her, and owing to the force of the current, it was found impossible for either of their crews to make their way back to his rescue. To add to the horrors of his situation, the sloop again hove in sight, and one of two miserable alternatives alone remained for him—namely, either to perish with his yacht, which was fast sinking, or resign himself a degraded prisoner to the maritime guardians of the revenue. He had but little time for deliberation; the waves were already washing over the bulwarks, and, to prevent himself from being swept away in defiance of his patent life-preserver, he was compelled to ascend the shrouds, and, with his too, too solid flesh, had by tremendous exertions succeeded in reaching almost the truck of the mast, to which he clung with fearful tenacity, when a sudden gust snapt the frail support asunder, and, sweeping him away, he fell into the water at some distance from the yacht, which had just disappeared, with an old gray-headed man clinging to it, beneath the breakers, and where he floated like a cork, but not quite so silently, inasmuch as he never ceased shouting for succour, till he found that further efforts were useless, the boats and the cutter being both out of sight, and his only hope of preservation resting on the possibility of his being picked up by some homeward-bound vessel, as soon as daylight should enable him to give his appeals a definite direction.

In the mean time the two boats, with the crew

of the '*Abraham Newland*' (among whom were Staunton and his friend), steered towards the Isle of Jersey, from which they were about two miles distant. They had nothing now to apprehend from their late pursuers, the moon having gone down, and the darkness which ensued upon its declension rendering efficient service in promoting their escape. They were not, however, secure from danger of a more formidable nature. The wind blowing off the shore carried with it a heavy surf, by which the foremost boat was suddenly swamped, and those who were in it, of whom Staunton was one, had nothing to rely on but their own unaided strength and resolution to save them from a watery grave. Staunton being an expert swimmer, alone succeeded in reaching the rocky causeway, which connected the beach with the detached fort at the entrance of the harbour. Here he was challenged by the sentinel on guard, and not deeming it prudent to discover himself, the soldier discharged his musket. The dislodging of a mass of loose stones, was accompanied by the thrilling cry of one in the agonies of death. In a few minutes the rapid roll of drums announced that the garrison, aroused by the signal, was turning out; and presently a number of men crowded the battlements, and leaning over, endeavoured by the light of their torches to discern the object from which the death-cry had sprung, but could perceive no traces of any human being on the approaches to the fort. There was, however, a vivid light in the northern horizon, as of a ship on fire at sea, upon which they remained gazing for some time, till the aurora was suddenly extinguished, and darkness once more spread its pall upon the broad and booming deep.

When the bright morning sunshine streamed upon St. Aubyn's bay, an old booted fisherman, who was proceeding to his boat and his daily labours, discovered the livid form of a man stretched on the weltering sands. There was a perforation in the skull, over the left eye-brow, which redeemed his death from the chapter of accidents, and gave interest to a circumstance, possessing in itself but slender claims to novelty. Having piously spread his net over the corpse, the old fisherman went in quest of assistance, but, when he returned, he found that both body and net had been washed away by the receding tide, leaving no traces visible of either. The old fisherman grieved for his net, and went home pondering deeply upon the vicissitudes to which poor humanity is daily and hourly exposed. His trials had been manifold. He had lost his old wife—his old teeth—and now he had lost what, in point of utility and service, was, in his present cynical state of mind, worth them all put together.

The fate of Marmaduke Brandon, like the innocence of Richard the Third, must ever remain, we fear, the subject of historical doubts and disputations. By some veracious chroniclers it is asserted, that he was picked up by a Danish merchantman, and conveyed to Copenhagen. Others, equally trustworthy and of good repute, deny this allegation, and contend that, supported by his patent life-preserver, his buoyant remains may even now be seen on a clear frosty night in the North Seas—the floating Welchman thus forming a companion-picture to that 'Flying Dutchman,' of whom the ancient mariner discourseth with bated breath, to his pale horror-suppering messmates on the fore-castle in the misty moonlight.

CHAPTER XIX.

So Death and Pride, pace side by side,
Cloister, mart, and feudal hall;
The satin that adorns the bride
Lends beauty to the funeral pall.
Ring out the merry church bells wide,
For vanity is lord of all.

THE CEMETERY.

IF a sense of abandonment, in which both participated, could engender feelings of mutual confidence and sympathy, then between Helen Bloomsbury and her cousin Mary should have existed ties of tenderness more soft than silk—more durable than adamant. Yet it was far otherwise. Helen, self-concentrated, sought not to communicate that grief which, unliberated, ‘whispers the o’er-fraught heart, and bids it break.’ She was still weak, and suffering from the effects of that fearful interview with Hippeley, when Mary came to visit her, and inquire with tender interest the cause of that dejection, which those in daily converse with her were unable to divine.

“You seem happy, Mary,” said Helen, regarding her cousin with a serious mien. “Are you really so?”

“You would not wish to see me otherwise, Helen?” said Mary; and the hand which Helen held trembled, against its gentle owner’s will.

The cousins looked in thoughtful silence at each other.

"I do not believe," said Helen, "that you feel so happy as you seem."


"For my father's sake," replied Mary, as her breathing quickened and her voice faltered—"for his sake, Helen—I must." And turning her head aside, she allowed the tears to flow, which she had, while speaking, with difficulty restrained.

"Why do you weep?" said Helen, with the slightest possible expression of scorn on her lip. "Is it because you have been slighted—wronged—betrayed? Ah, Mary! if you were better acquainted with the world, you would neither marvel nor grieve at the treachery of *one*. If you cannot resent the wrong—forget it, and despise its author. False, perjured villain!"

"Helen," said Mary, with tender earnestness, "you do not know him—indeed, you do not—or you would not judge him so harshly."

"Had I but held a dagger," said Helen—and her eyes emitted flashes more terrible even than her words—"I would have stabbed him to the heart." And rising, she was about to leave the room; but her strength failed her, and she sank back on the couch—her bosom heaving, and her clenched hands pressed against her drooping brow.

No sooner did Tom Inglewood hear, with sorrow and dismay, of the rupture between Helen Bloomsbury and his friend Horace, than he forthwith set the high-pressure engines of his invention at work, to concert measures for repairing a breach, whose magnitude would have filled any less sanguine bosom with inevitable despair. And in this good work—this 'labour of love,' as it might be called—our rural solicitor wrought with a pertinacity that was truly distressing, when we take into consi-



deration the notorious fact—notorious to all the members of his household, from the laundry-maid down to the gardener's boy ; but of which Tom, blinded we suppose by 'excess of light,' had no more suspicion than the sleeping infant in its mother's arms—the notorious fact, we repeat, that Captain Hippesley had formed a decided attachment to Tom's only surviving sister, housekeeper, and amanuensis, Mrs. Charlotte Stanley, the young widow of an Indian officer, in whom the personal recommendations and amiability which rendered her brother so popular, were united to an intelligence and refinement of manners, which our rural solicitor neither possessed nor aspired to.

The power-loom of Tom's imagination was still weaving schemes for a re-union, and which he duly submitted, as he did all matters of importance, for Charlotte's disinterested approval, when, about a week before the day fixed by his idolized Laura for a purpose which our confiding nature has prematurely disclosed, Tom was astounded by learning that Helen Bloomsbury had bestowed her hand—he did not stop to inquire respecting her heart—upon that polished specimen of human antiquity, Sir Otto de Beauvoir. Horace endeavoured to smile when he received this intelligence. Helen's affections had ever been bent upon a title, and now her ambition was gratified. As Sir Otto remarked, 'She must have the undivided worship of a devotee'—and, behold ! 'Raphael *was* her worshipper.' Horace mentally wished her every happiness, and took the earliest opportunity of securing his own, by forming an alliance with his friend Inglewood's sister Charlotte, whom even Lady Bloomsbury acknowledged to be a 'charming young widow.'

Old Lord Kew was present at the nuptials; his first appearance in public since his late melancholy bereavement, Lady Kew having departed this life on the very day that Sir Otto and Helen invested their happiness in matrimonial bonds, and exchanged a competency for a speculation.

The love which Clarence Linford entertained for Helen Bloomsbury, presents one of those dark passages in human destiny which show that neither natural nor social exaltation, intelligence nor rank, can evade the sorrows which spring from affection unrequited, and confidence betrayed. The tree whose lofty branches rise in scorn above the flood, is riven by the bolt that leaves its humbler brethren unscathed. In Clarence, the spirit which from imagination's highest pinnacle regards all excellence in form and conduct with a fascinated vision, was united to that nobler sensibility, which responds to the wail of suffering like the Eolian lyre, and gives forth its most celestial tones when swept by the wildest storm. His breast was an open temple of charity, his brain a panorama of dreams. With the great world he had never mingled sufficiently to learn its hollowness or feel its hate. Committed from an early period to the absolute control of an imperious step-mother, his life had been one of almost uninterrupted solitude and thought. It was true that by the persuasion of a noble relative he had been induced so far to diverge from its habitual seclusion, as on one or two occasions to take a minor part in the histrionic diversions of Talma Castle; and there it was, as before stated, that the influence of Helen's proud and intellectual beauty first played in dazzling fire around the consecrated altar of his love. He gazed in silence and adored.

Then came the fierce simoom to quench his eager sight, and blot out the palm-crowned oasis to which his pilgrim fancy had so long and fondly looked. She did not love him. Though her smile, her tone, her ear lent favour to his suit, Clarence saw, with death-like agony, that her sympathies were free as air, her heart cold and printless as the mountain snow. They parted, never—but once, to meet again.

Three years had glided away. Helen Bloomsbury, temporizing with another as she had done with Clarence, paid the penalty of the faithless. She was now the mockery of all, who can look without commiseration upon talent, grace, and beauty, allied to affectation and decrepitude. It was shortly after the arrival of Sir Otto de Beauvoir and his bride at Rome, that a visit was proposed to the convent of St. Agostino, whither they went accordingly. Having gratified their curiosity, they were about to retire, when a carriage drove up to the monastery gates, from which alighted a young man of a pale and pensive countenance. As with downcast eyes he entered, leaning on the arm of a priest, Helen was seized with a sudden tremor which increased almost to fainting, as in the stranger, casting a sidelong glance upon her blanched cheek, she recognised the wasted form of her once devoted lover—Clarence Linford. He did not speak, but passing on, allowed the gates to close behind him, which shut him out from all that life holds dear—from beauty, joy, and human sympathy—for ever.

The day before Tom's wedding, a friend met him in Chancery Lane, walking very fast, and apparently somewhat excited. On interrogating him

as to his destination, Tom cursorily observed that he was merely going to call on the Master of the Rolls, respecting a little private business of his own; which private business, on further examination, he confusedly stated was to solicit the favour of the Master erasing his (Mr. Inglewood's) name from that voluminous scroll, of which his title imported him to be the accredited custodian.

Tom's application, we presume, from what subsequently transpired, must have been most graciously received, and his prayer most promptly accorded, for on the same evening we find our ex-solicitor giving a champagne supper at the 'Albion,' to celebrate his own emancipation, at which Captain Hipplesey presided, and took the opportunity, when proposing Tom's health, to eulogize the high honour and firm principle which had always distinguished, not Thomas Inglewood alone, but every member of his esteemed family. Tom returned thanks in a neat pugnacious sort of speech, disclaiming all credit for the sacrifice he had made of his professional expectations. The fact was (Mr. Inglewood observed) that he had long been fighting against his conscience, and he now frankly acknowledged that his opponent was too much for him, and he had fairly been obliged to give in. True, he had now retired from the ring, but he trusted that never since he tied his colours to the stakes had he done anything to disgrace it. He had struck his last blow (by striking himself off the rolls); and in giving up all pretensions to the championship of the profession, he would assure his friends that he did not envy the chap who claimed it; he meant that heavy weight the Attorney-General, who, according to all accounts, was a good man, and a hard hitter (though Mr. Inglewood had

never tried on the gloves with him, and shouldn't know him from Adam, if he was to see him), but to whom, notwithstanding, Tom wished all the success he could have wished himself, had he (Mr. Inglewood) been fortunate enough to have won the belt. He would, however, just recommend his old professional rival, if he fancied there wasn't his match in all England, to have a round or two with Mrs. M'Rowdy, and if the champion did not find her to be the 'ugliest customer' he ever had to deal with, our ex-rural solicitor declared that he would cheerfully forfeit all his knowledge of 'Coke upon Littlewood.'

¶ Passing from one professional gentleman, we come to another, Mr. Pluckey, that powerful but capricious censor. Foiled in the pursuit of his forensic ambition by an alleged conspiracy between the bench, the bar, and the public, he made a successful appeal to civic sympathies, and was honoured with the appointment of out-door deputy registrar of city tolls—his office being at the corner of Wood Street, Cheap-side, where he might daily be seen with pen and ink-horn, jotting down a list of numerals that baffled the comprehension of many a sagacious Yorkshireman, who stopped and 'woondered whoy the city didn't give their clerk a desk and stool loike, to make him more coomfortable.' But even in this airy situation, Mr. Pluckey found opportunities of displaying his skill in reduction, when some old gentleman in green spectacles (a suspected member of the Statistical Society), would politely inquire of Mr. Pluckey if so many accidents really happened on the wood pavement as were generally represented; whereupon Mr. Pluckey would boldly affirm that the newspaper reports were gross exaggerations, *and though a few horses' knees were broken occa-*

sionally, he believed that even they (the horses) were, by their partial riders, most 'enormously over-valued!'

— The same journal that announced the marriage of the Rev. Mr. Bleat to a certain lady of a certain age, and a large property qualification, recorded the triumphant *début* at the San Carlo of a young English lady, whose personal and vocal attractions had long been the theme of admiration in the fashionable circles of both Naples and Paris. The *débutante* in question was Lady de Beauvoir (otherwise Mademoiselle —), who, having, within three months after marriage, unhesitatingly acceded to her knight's proposal for a separate maintenance, had yielded to the persuasions of an illustrious *maestro*, by whose successful tuition she was eventually conducted to the vacant throne of song, where, as *prima donna*, she reigned supreme, till the sudden demise of Sir Otto, restoring her to perfect freedom, she resigned her ideal crown for something equally tangible (a palpitating heart), which was laid at her feet by an Italian count, who, in his humble estimate of the value of human existence, protested that he lived for her, and her alone.

We have purposely reserved for our final *bonne bouche*, a scrap of intelligence which we doubt not will be hailed with gratification by all who advocate, not so much the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as the largest sum of felicity for those who are most deserving of it. Through the indefatigable mediation of Dr. Hedgehog, the road, though long and steep, was paved for the return of Walter Brandon to that state of marital bliss which, with a rare conscientiousness, he had so honourably relinquished. And in this benevolent task the worthy physician laboured with a constitutiona

ardour, that derived additional stimulus from his high appreciation of Walter's noble and self-denying disposition, which had raised his estimate of human nature's moral capabilities full five hundred per cent., and given him infinite delight to find that, although the heroic age has passed, some sparks of its chivalrous spirit survived in one, whom he deemed it an enviable privilege to call his friend. Poor Mr. Shuttleworth listened to the doctor's fervent eulogiums more in sorrow than in anger; he could not deny his *protégé's* moral excellence, but he regretted—deeply regretted—that he bore a name which was associated with such painful reminiscences of duplicity and fraud. In vain Dr. Hedgehog rallied him upon the folly of being affected by nominal antipathies; the old gentleman had set his heart upon a 'Petersham,' and could not be comforted. As for Mary, she was still the same simple little cabinet picture of patience and devotedness. Confiding in that overruling beneficence which regulates all things for the best, and assured that sooner or later her father would relent, Mary tended the infirm old man with affectionate assiduity, and thought only of ministering to his comfort and consolation. She did not even mention the name of Walter, till one day a letter, sealed with black, came addressed to Mr. Shuttleworth. It was in Walter's handwriting, announcing the death of his unhappy parent, and soliciting permission to wait upon Mr. Shuttleworth and obtain his forgiveness before he left England, never more to return. Mr. Shuttleworth mused over the letter for a long time, then turning to Mary, who, pale and silent, waited his fiat, he directed her to sit down, and write to his dictation. With a trembling hand, Mary obeyed. The answer *was* very short, consisting of only these words,

‘Come, all is forgiven.’ When the old man had signed the required pardon, he sank back listlessly, as if life had no longer any interest for him. His mist-enveloped dreams of ambition had vanished. Like King Lear (poor Shuttleworth could think of no less exalted a comparison), he felt that he had been a foolish, weak, old man, and saw, now the sere and yellow leaves were trembling on the bough, that all was vexation, vanity, and vapour.

It was a soft and tranquil evening in June. Poor old Mr. Shuttleworth, reclining in his easy chair beside the open window, through which the balmy air breathed fragrance, stolen from a neighbouring bed of violets, presented an image of complete, though painless, prostration and decay. Mary and Walter stood silently on either side of him. He clasped their hands, and blessed them. A physician was writing at a table in the centre of the room: he looked at his watch, and then at his patient. “Doctor,” said the old man, motioning him to approach. The physician bent down—for his patient’s voice was almost inaudible. “Nearer,” whispered the old man, as his eyelids closed, and his palsied hands dropped helplessly beside him—“Bury me,” he added—the ruling passion strong in death prompting his last ejaculations—“bury me in—in—Westminster Abbey.”

The wound inflicted upon Bishop Barking’s dignity by Captain Duckweed, was healed by the latter consenting to make a donation (fixed by the Bishop at one shilling) to the poor debtors of the Fleet prison; which done, Barking and Duckweed were forthwith invited to regale themselves by a mutual friend (Puffadder, the insolvent originator of Airopathy), in whose hands the peace offering had been judiciously deposited. It was at the

festive meeting that Bishop Barking announced his intention of shortly publishing the fourth volume of his 'Etymologia' (to which would be appended 'Notes on Pooh,' and a 'Critical Inquiry into the Derivation of Pshaw,') and also a new and cheap edition of his invaluable 'Dissertation on Bah!'

A few days after old Joe West's funeral, Mr Bodger called a meeting of the trade at 'Paul's Chain,' where he moved a string of resolutions, which, carried out, would assign to the chief city magistrate, a permanent residence at Boulogne, and prevent Fleet Street (in Bodger's powerful language) 'from ever agin being ridden over rough-shod by a Mare.'

Scroggy did not long survive his benefactor, but it is to be regretted, that shortly before his death his nobler faculties began to show symptoms of decay. For many years, during which he was actively engaged in his professional pursuits, no one had ever detected a blot on Scroggy's moral 'scutcheon; and in his old age, his friends were therefore surprised to learn that he so far forgot what was due to himself and to society, as to way-lay a little girl in the Minories, from whom he furtively snatched the section of a ram's head, with which he trotted off in a most shabby manner. The hue and cry of course was instantly raised, but ere the culprit could be arrested, he had sunk to his mother earth, and given up the ghost of the head and his own also, without uttering so much as a growl.

Staunton's friend who had 'business in Jersey,' and who is supposed to have perished in his passage thither, was a Swiss—by name Jean Jacques Chiseler. The feelings of mutual esteem which *their long acquaintance* implied, originally took root

in a Parisian hospital, of which Chiseler was a temporary inmate, and where Staunton attended as a student of medicine. Having obtained his diploma, Staunton, in his professional capacity, accompanied an invalid baronet to Brussels, where the patient died—having first made a testamentary gift to his physician of all his mines and minerals. A nephew, however, of this munificent patron of physic, not only disputed the validity of the document, under which his late uncle's executor claimed a considerable amount of tin in Cornwall, and we know not how many coal-fields in Northumberland, but provoked Staunton to a personal *rencontre*, which ended in the latter—a cool and practised swordsman—disarming his antagonist, and then deliberately running his weapon through the despairing victim's heart. For this atrocity Staunton, who had been arrested in his flight before he could reach the frontier, was tried by the Supreme Court of Justice, and condemned to five years imprisonment in the Fortress of Namur, and a fine of two thousand francs. Through some high influence, however, the fine was remitted, and his term of imprisonment abridged. On his liberation, Staunton proceeded to Italy, where, having no other resource, he literally 'gained' his subsistence, not by honourable pharmacy, but disreputable play. It was at Genoa that Staunton renewed his acquaintance with Jean Jacques Chiseler, who had for some time previously been in Lord Petersham's service as his *valet de chambre*, and upon whose untimely death Chiseler and his medical friend returned to England, for the purpose of transacting certain business of an ennobling character. The career of Staunton in conducting this hazardous enterprise has been described. The exploits of Chiseler, if not so deeply stained with crime, were

scarcely less interesting. Having conceived a tender passion for Miss Ferret, during her engagement at a circulating library at Bath, they were, within a few days after the momentous interview between the retired lady's-maid and Captain Hippley, united in holy wedlock. Before the placid moon, however, which smiled upon the bridal-wreath of that estimable young person had fairly shed its horns, Madame Chiseler was surprised by receiving a visit from a lady with a foreign accent, who, it appeared, had a prior and long-existing claim upon Monsieur's connubial allegiance. A union of arms instantly took place, and a simultaneous attack was made upon the common enemy, who escaped by dropping from a first-floor window, bearing with him an extensive assortment of scratches; but which, though engraved on brass, and cleverly executed, were deemed by their recipient an unsuitable compensation for the partial loss of mustachios, and the uprooting of a vast profusion of capital hair. Having rejoined his friend Staunton as he was embarking in the '*Abraham Newland*,' Chiseler craved protection, and sailed with him on his proposed voyage to Jersey or St. Malo. In conclusion, it is almost superfluous to state, that it was to this long-trusted and unfaithful servant of Lord Petersham's that Staunton was indebted for those documents, and that minute information, which enabled him, with what result has already been shewn, to prosecute his PLOT for a PEERAGE.

THE END.



